

UK Government
InvestmentsDepartment for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Date: 10 February 2020
 Director General: Justin Manson
 Lead Official: Alex Cole
 Lead Official Telephone: GRO

Recipient	To Note / Comment	To Approve / Decide
Permanent Secretary		X
Kelly Tolhurst	X	

Annual letter to the Post Office Chair

Summary

- 1) A Chair's letter to Tim Parker clarifying the shareholder priorities for 2020/21.

Timing

- 2) Urgent. We would like to send this letter to Tim Parker in advance of the post office debate scheduled in the Lords on 25 February.

Recommendation

- 3) That you approve the Chair letter and meet with the Chair to discuss.

Background

- 4) The attached Chair letter sets out 8 priorities, with a particular focus on two issues:
 - Developing and agreeing the company's new strategy, which in turn will inform their Spending Review bid. We expect negotiations around the plan to be tough.
 - Further steps in relation to the litigation, to demonstrate that POL is implementing the settlement agreement, changing its culture and improving its relationship with postmasters.
- 5) A debate has been tabled for the Lords on 25 February. The debate is asking two questions:
 - What steps they intend to take in response to the judgment in Bates v Post Office.
 - Whether they intend to take any action against the directors responsible for the Horizon Accounting System.
- 6) We would like to send the Chair letter in advance of this debate (for which separate briefing will be provided), so that ministers can make reference to it in their responses. In particular, the letter requests that POL's Chair sets out in writing the steps POL is taking to implement the commitments made in the settlement, and to provide regular updates.



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Next steps

7) We recommend that you meet with the Chair after it has been sent.

Do you agree to send the Chair's letter and to meet with Tim Parker to discuss?