
From: Martin Edwards [GRO]
Sent: Tue 13/05/2014 10:41:23 AM (UTC)
To: Belinda Crowe [GRO]; Mark R Davies [GRO]; Chris Aujard [GRO]; David Oliver [GRO]
Subject: RE: Sparrow: draft letters and next steps
Attachment: 20140513 PV to JA letter 13 may.docx

Thanks Belinda – I think your new draft is definitely an improvement and also helps address some of the pitfalls flagged in my email to Paula below. I've just made a few further stylistic changes in the attached, but the substance is the same as yours.

I've given Paula a copy of this new draft as she will be seeing Alice shortly, but we can take on further changes over the next couple of hours if necessary. Would be good to get this letter sent by the end of the day.

Do you want to amend the JW letter as you suggest below?

Martin

From: Belinda Crowe
Sent: 13 May 2014 09:43
To: Martin Edwards; Mark R Davies; Chris Aujard; David Oliver [GRO]
Cc: Belinda Crowe
Subject: RE: Sparrow: draft letters and next steps

I agree with Martin's assessment. It depends what we want to achieve from the letters: In relation to the letter to the Minister, we want to set out our assessment of the progress of the Scheme (as compared what AB has said) whilst flagging that we too have concerns about the time and cost of the Scheme. In addition the JFSA letter raises a matter of trust, particularly as we have worked closely with them throughout. Whilst it is taking longer to investigate cases than we had hoped, the considerable cost and time is, in part, as a result of the way the Scheme has been set up - a way which accommodated many of the wishes of the stakeholders with whom we collaborated. If, now, those Stakeholders are not satisfied with the way the Scheme is operating we should review it in light of experience. That is what we are doing. I see nothing wrong in saying that we are reviewing it. In fact there would be something wrong if we were not. The result of that review could be that we make few or no changes. In that respect the letter to the Minister seems to hit the mark. What it does not do is spell out some of our other concerns about CFAs and the expectations gap. I think they are also compelling reasons for reviewing the position. At the risk of making the letter longer they could be added.

The JA letter is more tricky. If our aim is to share with him, privately, some of our concerns about SS and also buy some time while we decide how best to proceed then I also think the letter hits the mark. However, I have had another go at a draft which aims to highlight the fact that things are not quite as he might think and suggests a meeting to expand on some of our concerns without signalling anything in terms of the future. It also strengthens the arguments as to why there should not be a report at this stage. The tone is meant to be collaborative and stressing the need for discretion.

Grateful for views
Belinda

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From: Martin Edwards
Sent: 12 May 2014 23:55
To: Paula Vennells
Cc: Belinda Crowe; Chris Aujard; David Oliver; Mark R Davies
Subject: RE: Sparrow: draft letters and next steps

Hi Paula

As requested, I'm attaching slightly shorter versions of the letters which cuts out some of the excess wording but still retains the same substance.

You asked what aspects of these letters might 'spook' Alice when you share them with her. I guess the main potential concerns would be that:

a) while falling short of some of the firmer language we debated internally, the letters still clearly hint that we are considering alternative options to expedite the scheme in some way, before we have made a final decision on what this means in practice. Given that we should work on the assumption that these letters (especially the JA one) are likely to be shared with other parties, this could provoke a reaction from the stakeholders concerned and draw us into making some form of statement about our intentions. (Clearly we will need to have our lines prepared in advance).

b) Likewise, it commits to a further meeting with James Arbuthnot before we have worked out exactly what we will say at that meeting and how far we will go in sharing our thinking (but equally we need to get this letter out now to play for some time, otherwise there is the risk that JA will share the various pieces of correspondence with other MPs without our side of the story).

b) we are treading a fine line in terms of discussing aspects of the Working Group process with parties outside of the Working Group - which is obviously the very criticism we make about Alan Bates. (Our response would be that we have only stated the bare minimum needed to refute the accusations which AB has already put in the public domain).

Copying to the others in case they have additional views.

See you in the morning.

Martin

From: Martin Edwards
Sent: 12 May 2014 18:24
To: Paula Vennells
Cc: Belinda Crowe; Chris Aujard; David Oliver; Mark R Davies
Subject: Sparrow: draft letters and next steps

Hi Paula

Back to Earth after conference....

As promised, attached are the current draft letters for Jenny Willott and James Arbuthnot, which have been iterated with everyone on this copy list. They have also been reviewed by Linklaters (whose main comment was to be careful

about making any statements which directly reaffirm our commitment to the scheme *per se* rather than to the fair and swift resolution of the cases in general).

There are of course a spectrum of options for making these letter firmer or softer, which we debated before settling on the balance that is struck in these drafts. Let us know if you have any comments or questions.

Belinda has also outlined the broader proposed next steps on Sparrow in her email below (not least for reference at your 1:1 with Alice tomorrow).

See you in the morning,
Martin

From: Belinda Crowe
Sent: 12 May 2014 16:29
To: Martin Edwards
Cc: Chris Aujard; Belinda Crowe; David Oliver^[mailto:daoliver@postoffice.co.uk]
Subject: Note for Paula in advance of her meeting with Alice

Martin,

As requested please find below a note for Paula including recent activity, a timeline of upcoming events for the Scheme, a suggestion for the date of the next Board Sub Committee in light of the above and some suggested names of people for Paula to consider with whom she might discuss the Tony Hooper meeting. Please feel free to tweak.

Recent activity

- *SS circulated near final draft of their first report to WG for comment*
- *Chris Aujard wrote to SS with high-level comments on style of report to reflect comments that PO had made at the previous Working group meeting but had not been taken on board by SS*
- *Tony Hooper sent his letter to the Minister*
- *Letters prepared for Paula to send to James Arbuthnot and Jenny Willott*

Forthcoming Events

- **12/13 May** - *Tony Hooper to formally send first SS report (with PO investigation report) to applicant and PO for comment*
- **13 May** - *draft Deloitte report(Phase 1) submitted(Lesley Sewell's update for Sub Committee refers)*
- **15 May** - *next Working Group teleconference.*
- **15 May** - *Paula's meeting with Tony Hooper.*
- **15 May** - *two further Second Sight reports due along with their factual briefing note for mediators due.*
- **16 May** - *Deloitte executive summary (Phase 2) due (Lesley Sewell's update for Sub Committee refers).*
- **20 May** - *all day face to face meeting of the Working Group.*
- **21 May** - *full meeting of the Post Office Board.*

Suggested timing for next Sub Committee

In his update to the Sub Committee, sent on 6 May, Chris Aujard said that we would suggest a date(s) for the next Sub Committee as soon as possible, it will though be no later than the evening of 20 May (the Chair had, at the Sub Committee meeting, suggested that the next meeting should probably be before the next full Board meeting). However, given the need to ensure that the papers are circulated in a timely fashion and reflect Paula's discussions

with Tony Hooper, the further reports Second Sight are due to deliver, and the Deloitte work it is proposed that the papers are circulated to the Sub Committee on 21 May with the meeting being held 7 days later on 28 May.

To ensure that the Chair is kept apprised of events and also has the opportunity to feed into and shape the Board Sub Committee papers it is proposed that a teleconference between Paula, Alice and Chris Aujard be arranged on 19 May.

Discussion with an external sounding board ahead of meeting Tony Hooper

We have given further thought to who would provide Paula with an good sounding board ahead of the meeting with Tony. The suggestions below are restricted by the sensitivity of the subject matter and the need to get the individual up to speed before Thursday.

1. **Christa Band** – given Linklaters involvement to date, the quality of advice she has provided and the benefits of legal privilege Christa is our recommended candidate.
2. **David Behan**- Current CEO of CQC – a person Paula knows and who might offer a perspective based on little first hand knowledge (a fresh pair of eyes)
3. **Nick Montagu**- Current Chair of the FOS, Former Chair of Inland Revenue – would understand the political dimensions as well as the complaints handling landscape
4. **Martin Donnelly** – Permanent Secretary BIS – at some point will need to engage with this issue and getting an early perspective/understanding may be a useful side effect
5. **Mark Russell** – CEO Shareholder Executive – as with Martin Donnelly.

Regards

Belinda

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