
From: NEVILLE-ROLFE, Baroness <GRO>
Sent: 26 August 2015 16:55
To: Neville-Rolfe MPST
Cc: Neville-Rolfe Lucy
Subject: Re: Post Office - Horizon

I will leave this until I get back. This will give you time to provide something fuller on the issues and on all the accusations in the programme, provide a substantive and objective letter to the 3 MPs bearing in mind that we now have 4 important people who are not going along with our approach. We also need to assess our tactical handling options and how these will play out, including the involvement of Tim Parker and how we use this to best effect. You will also want to involve Harriet on her return and senior officials bearing in mind that all external voices seem very uneasy with the Post Office on this.
Lucy

Sent from my iPad

On 25 Aug 2015, at 07:33, Neville-Rolfe MPST <GRO> wrote:

Minister,

Apologies I forgot to attach the advice it is now copied below:

Further to your email and our conversation from yesterday please see below a little background on the points raised by Andrew Bridgen and a proposed response to his email. I have discussed the proposed response with Richard.

Post Office have also confirmed that the subpostmaster in Oliver Letwin's constituency is Tracey Merritt, who was mediated in November 2014. No prosecution was mounted against her, and while settlement options were discussed in the mediation process no agreement was ultimately reached. As I am sure you understand, Post Office are unable to share the details of this mediation process. In addition Post Office have assured us that they did everything in their power to try and reach a reasonable outcome, and that this has been confirmed by a confidential email from the mediator involved.

If any of this is unclear, or you have any questions please give me a call.

Many thanks,

Tim

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION
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1.) Fujitsu Remote Access

- Horizon does not have functionality that allows Post Office or Fujitsu to edit or delete the transactions recorded by branches. There has been no evidence in any case reviewed as part of the Scheme that shows that these controls have failed or that the above statement is incorrect.
- It has however always been possible for Post Office to correct errors in and/or update a branch's accounts. This is most commonly done by way of a transaction correction however

it could also be by way of a balancing transaction or transaction acknowledgement. A Post Office employee could also, in special circumstances, log on to a branch terminal locally (i.e. by being physically in a branch) using a new User ID and password and then conduct transactions (though these would register against that unique User ID).

- All of the above processes for correcting / updating a branch's accounts have similar features. All of them involve inputting a new transaction into the branch's records (not editing or removing any previous transactions) and all are shown transparently in the branch transaction records available to Subpostmasters (as well as in the master ARQ data).

2.) Second Sight Allegations

- Second Sight has written to Ministers to complain its report has been misrepresented and now appear to be asserting that systemic flaws in Horizon do exist. Second Sight's reports have not identified any link between Horizon and the losses to the postmasters in the cases they reviewed, nor has it identified any transaction caused by a technical fault in Horizon which has resulted in a postmaster wrongly being held responsible for a loss. There is no evidence that the Horizon system does not work as it should.
- There is, in fact, overwhelming evidence that the losses complained of were caused by user actions, including in some cases, deliberate dishonest conduct.

From: NEVILLE-ROLFE, Baroness [mailto:neville.rolfe@parliamentary.gov.uk] GRO
Sent: 25 August 2015 15:28
To: Neville-Rolfe MPST
Cc: Neville-Rolfe Lucy
Subject: Re: Post Office - Horizon

I am not happy with this and I would prefer to have substantive advice including an analysis of the points the MPs make after my return and how we can respond to them persuasively

Is there a case for alerting Tim Parker?

We are dealing with senior people like Letwin and Arbutnot and this is not easy as I have said all along

Lucy

Sent from my iPhone

On 25 Aug 2015, at 12:50, "Neville-Rolfe MPST" <neville.rolfe@parliamentary.gov.uk> wrote:

Minister,

It has been suggested that you might like to send a hold reply to Andrew Bridgen as drafted below. You can offer a meeting if you would like. This has been cleared with SpAds.

I have also sent a webmarking quote to your Dame Lucy account for you to clear. This is attached

Have an enjoyable and safe trip

Kind regards

Andrew Smith

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your recent email.

As you are aware I am meeting with James Arbuthnot in September regarding Post Office and I expect that discussion to touch on a range of points, including the allegations raised in the recent BBC Panorama broadcast.

[At that meeting I will also make sure we discuss what further action might be appropriate. If a meeting with you represents the right course of action at that point I would be more than willing to consider it.]

You will also be aware that I have asked Tim Parker, Post Office Limited's new Chair, to take a close look at Horizon when he takes up his role in October. Tim has a strong background working in a range of complex organisations, as a senior executive and as a Board member, and I am confident that his fresh pair of eyes will provide some further reassurance to you.

In light of the above and, in addition, given both Post Office's ongoing commitment to the mediation scheme and the applications by subpostmasters that have been made to the Criminal Case Review Commission, I do not believe that it would be appropriate for Government to take any further action at this time. This includes launching an independent investigation into Horizon.

I look forward to discussing the matter with James Arbuthnot next month.

Kind regards,

From: BRIDGEN, Andrew [mailto:] GRO
Sent: 24 August 2015 12:50
To: Neville-Rolfe MPST
Cc: JONES, Kevan; LETWIN, Oliver
Subject: RE: Post Office - Horizon

Dear Lucy,

We write further to your letter dated 14th August 2015 regarding the Post Office Horizon software. In light of the subsequent BBC Panorama programme broadcast on the 17th August, all three of us representing those of our constituents who have been affected, now request a further meeting to discuss this matter.

There were several allegations in the broadcast which we feel need urgent attention -- the two principal issues being (1) the statement from the Fujitsu whistle blower that transactions could be remotely manipulated and (2) the statements by Second Sight which contradicted the version of the Second Sight report that the Post Office has presenting to Ministers, MPs and the media.

In light of these serious developments, we are convinced that the interests of our constituents require this matter to be independently investigated -- ideally by a private sector entrepreneur with experience of managing organisations of this scale. We would suggest someone with the standing of Sir Terry Leahy or Baron Rose of Monewden to undertake such a review.

We very much hope you will be willing to meet us to discuss this matter as soon as possible.

Kind Regards,

Andrew Bridgen MP

Kevan Jones MP

Oliver Letwin MP

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