
From: Cable MPST[/O=BIS PRODUCTION/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=C6C0F9E367844414874B9FD89C46E311-CABLE MPS]
Sent: Tue 24/03/2015 5:13:39 PM (UTC)
To: MPST Central Admin; [redacted] GRO; Parly Unit - Others; [redacted] GRO
Cc: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive); [redacted] GRO; Swinson MPST; [redacted] GRO; Callard Richard (ShEx); [redacted] GRO
Subject: FW: Post Office mediation: response to letter from BIS Select Committee
Attachment: 150324 response to Adrian Bailey MP v5.docx

Patrick/Dionne,

Are you ok to prep the attached letter for SoS' hard copy signature please?

Thanks
Tara

Tara Fernando | Private Secretary to the Secretary of State | Department for Business, Innovation & Skills | email:

[redacted] GRO
Please note: in line with Cabinet Office guidance MPST does not keep records of Ministerial business. Responsibility for storing records sits with the relevant departmental team. Please ensure you are familiar with what records you need to be keeping and are storing them appropriately.

From: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive)
Sent: 24 March 2015 09:27
To: Swinson MPST; Cable MPST
Cc: Callard Richard (ShEx); McInnes Tim (ShEx); Parly Unit - Others; Franklin-Wallis Hannah (Communications)
Subject: RE: Post Office mediation: response to letter from BIS Select Committee

Hi Claire

Thanks for providing the Minister's feedback on the letter. I attach what is (hopefully) the final version.

As you will see, section 4.5 says that Govt is happy to accept the committee's recommendation that POL should send BIS a copy of the report when it is completed (as we know it is not finished yet). I have discussed this with POL and agreed this as a form of words that works, and POL were content with it. I hope the language works for the Minister.

I have kept in the paragraph clarifying that the SS report is not on the operation of the Horizon system, but rather on operational matters for POL. As we discussed I think this is an important point to make because it reiterates the Government position that we do not intervene in operational issues.

If both Ministers are content, I'd be grateful if the letter could issue today if possible. The letter should be copied to Paula Vennells of Post Office.

Thanks
Laura

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director | Shareholder Executive

[redacted] GRO

From: Swinson MPST

Sent: 23 March 2015 14:45

To: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive); Cable MPST

Cc: Callard Richard (ShEx); McInnes Tim (ShEx); Parly Unit - Others; Franklin-Wallis Hannah (Communications)

Subject: RE: Post Office mediation: response to letter from BIS Select Committee

Hi Laura,

We spoke. The Minister is still of the view that BIS should hold a copy of the documents and you have agreed to speak to POL about how this request could be accommodated.

I'd be grateful if the letter could be redrafted accordingly.

Thanks,

Claire

From: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive)

Sent: 23 March 2015 12:33

To: Swinson MPST; Cable MPST

Cc: Callard Richard (ShEx); McInnes Tim (ShEx); Parly Unit - Others; Franklin-Wallis Hannah (Communications)

Subject: RE: Post Office mediation: response to letter from BIS Select Committee

Claire

Thanks very much for feeding back Jo's comments on the advice. As we discussed on Friday, I have redrafted section 4 of the response relating to whether Government should receive a copy of Second Sight's report.

Our advice remains that Government should not receive a copy of the report. The revised drafting emphasises two points:

1. The report will be sent to Post Office who have publicly committed (including to the Committee itself) that they will not destroy information relating to the scheme, and as such it is not necessary for HMG to also hold a copy
2. Moreover, the report does not relate to the operation of the Horizon system (which has been demonstrated is not at fault) but rather, relates to issues which will be operational matters for Post Office. It is Government policy that we do not intervene in operational matters for POL, and as such, we do not think it would be appropriate for HMG to request a copy.

The second point is particularly pertinent here. We strongly advise the Minister that Government should maintain its independence here. This is important because, if Government were to request (and receive) a copy of the report, it becomes implicit that Government could be called upon to respond to the report, and potentially to become more involved in the mediation scheme. Moreover, our wider policy on Post Office is that we set the parameters for POL to operate and we then allow POL the freedom to operate – blurring that line here could lead to pressure to do so again in the future.

I would also just flag the point made previously that the Second Sight interim report, when completed, will be issued to those applicants remaining in the scheme, including members of JFSA, so the report will not be held solely by Post Office. There is also a high likelihood that the report may be leaked (based on precedent).

Hope that helps – do let me know if there is any other information the Minister would find helpful. Very happy to chat through.

Thanks
Laura

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director | Shareholder Executive

GRO

From: Swinson MPST
Sent: 20 March 2015 12:22
To: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive); Cable MPST
Cc: Callard Richard (ShEx); McInnes Tim (ShEx); Parly Unit - Others; Franklin-Wallis Hannah (Communications)
Subject: RE: Post Office mediation: response to letter from BIS Select Committee

Hi Tara/ Laura,

Jo Swinson saw the response to Adrian Bailey which she is happy with. However she wasn't comfortable with one of the response in the Annex of the letter at 4.2 about it not being appropriate for the Government to receive a copy of the report. She thinks that this is a sensible recommendation from BISComm and that as sole shareholder Government should hold a copy of the report for audit trail purposes.

Laura – could you please advise if this is an absolute showstopper so I can put further advice to the Minister as needed. Alternatively if we can live with this could the response please be redrafted to reflect this steer.

Thanks,

Claire

From: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive)
Sent: 20 March 2015 11:16
To: Swinson MPST; Cable MPST
Cc: Callard Richard (ShEx); McInnes Tim (ShEx); Parly Unit - Others; Franklin-Wallis Hannah (Communications)
Subject: RE: Post Office mediation: response to letter from BIS Select Committee

Hi Tara, Claire

Just to let you both know that the BIS Select Committee have published their letter to SoS about the Post Office mediation scheme on their website. I think we can therefore expect they will publish our response as well. This is fine, the response has been drafted on that presumption, but just to make you both aware.

Post Office have been in touch as they would be keen to correct some of the inaccuracies in the Committee's letter, but I have asked them to wait until the Government has had a chance to respond.

Thanks

Laura

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director | Shareholder Executive

GRO

From: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive)
Sent: 18 March 2015 16:59
To: Swinson MPST (GRO) Cable MPST
Cc: Callard Richard (ShEx); McInnes Tim (ShEx)
Subject: FW: Post Office mediation: response to letter from BIS Select Committee
Importance: High

Hi both

One change to the letter (revised version attached) and I'd be grateful if this revised version could go to the Ministers.

The change is the addition of a line at the end of the letter saying that SoS is copying his letter to Paula Vennells so that Post Office can reflect on the points raised.

Thanks
Laura

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director | Shareholder Executive

GRO

From: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive)

Sent: 18 March 2015 16:09

To: Cable MPST; Swinson MPST; GRO

Cc: Hancock MPST.; Clark MPST; SPAD Cable MPST; SPAD Hancock MPST.; SPAD Clark MPST; Perm Sec (BIS); Russell Mark (ShEx); Odgers Anthony (ShEx); Callard Richard (ShEx); McInnes Tim (ShEx); Baugh James (ShEx); Parly Unit - Others; Franklin-Wallis Hannah (Communications); Rogers Ashley (Communications)

Subject: Post Office mediation: response to letter from BIS Select Committee

Tara, Claire

Please see attached submission and proposed draft response for the Secretary of State to send to Adrian Bailey as Chair of the BIS Select Committee, regarding the Post Office mediation scheme. I also attached Mr Bailey's original letter.

In terms of timing, it would be good practice for SoS to reply before the last sitting day of Parliament, so it would be helpful if the letter could issue on Monday or Tuesday next week if possible.

Very happy to provide any additional information that might be helpful.

Thanks
Laura

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director, Post Office Network Team | Shareholder Executive

BIS, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET

GRO

GRO

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-shareholder-executive

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