

The Rt Hon Peter Mandelson MP
Secretary of State for Trade and Industry



Secretary of State
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14 September 1998

CHIEF SECRETARY	
REC.	14 SEP 1998
ACTION	Mr Sharples
COPIES TO	BA / POCC

In Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 10 September setting out your detailed proposals for taking forward the steps we agreed at our meeting the previous evening.

I confirm that I am content with what you have proposed. In particular I accept the remit set out in paragraph 5 of your letter. My objective within the initial timescale of one month will be as a minimum to agree with the Post Office Board the actions that need to be taken on each of the items listed; to ensure that practical measures are put in place as quickly as possible to take these actions forward; to institute arrangements to monitor progress on a regular basis; and to be in a position to report back to colleagues such substantive progress as may have proved possible on each by the end of the first month.

I was pleased to see that you envisage a role for the troubleshooter which extends beyond the initial negotiation, and that this is reflected in the draft terms of reference. This will be important in minimising the misunderstandings and disagreements between the parties which have undoubtedly contributed to delays in the past.

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Finally, I agree with your suggestion for an Interdepartmental Working Group, including the Policy Unit, and my officials stand ready to play a full and constructive part in its work.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Jack Cunningham, Alastair Darling and Sir Richard Wilson, and to Ian McCartney here.

GRO

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