

Message

From: Alice Perkins [GRO]
on behalf of Alice Perkins [GRO]
Sent: 29/10/2013 15:14:56
To: Alwen Lyons [GRO]
CC: Paula Vennells [GRO]
Subject: RE: brief for meeting with James Arbuthnot

Thank you Alwen.

I have read the headlines and will read the rest in slower time.

I have one immediate reaction.

Why has the decision on being a prosecuting authority now slipped – again - to end December. Why can't it come to the late November Board? Are we making more of a meal than this than we need to?

Perhaps either you or Paula can come back to me on this tomorrow?

Many thanks

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From: Alwen Lyons [GRO]
Sent: 29 October 2013 13:32
To: Alice Perkins
Subject: brief for meeting with James Arbuthnot

Alice

I know you are meeting James over the weekend so I have sent through the part of the CEO report which relates to Sparrow and also the Press Release for the appointment of Sir Anthony Hooper. James also has another subpostmaster, Mr. Yogesh Patel, who has applied to be involved in the mediation.

Please let me know if you need anything more



High level points are:

- **Appointment of Sir Anthony – nominated by Kay Linnell and supported by Alan Bates**
- **Cases still coming in we expect about 100- 120 in total by cut off on the 18th November**
- **Still aiming for the majority to be completed by the end of March**
- **The Business working on the range of settlements which will need to have been agreed before the first mediation – we have to be mindful that we are dealing with 'public money'**
- **Brian Altman QC has concluded that the approach to passed criminal cases is 'fundamentally sound' we have no appeals to date**
- **Business is reviewing its approach to prosecutions a decision will be made by the end of December.**
- **The Business User Forum involving sub-postmasters will meet for the first time in November**

Project Sparrow update from the Board CEO report for more detail

- The Mediation Scheme has received 64 applications from sub-postmasters since it was opened at the end of August, with more expected before the deadline of 18 November. The Working Group overseeing the running of the scheme is now reviewing these applications to decide which should be accepted onto the scheme, which should be excluded and which require further information before a decision can be made. The aim is to get a few cases started on the mediation process before the end of 2013 with the majority happening between January and March next year. Sir Anthony Hooper has now been appointed as the Chair of the Working Group, and will lead his first meeting on 25 October.
- We are in the process of developing our internal settlement policy for the scheme, the purpose of which is to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to each case based on a clear understanding of the potential range of costs and outcomes from the process. A first draft will be discussed by the ExCo in November, although it will be subject to further refinement in light of the additional information that emerges about the caseload and our initial experiences of the full mediation process.
- Our external firm of criminal solicitors, Cartwright King (CK), has now completed a review of 301 cases subject to past prosecution to identify whether we have a duty to disclose the findings of the Second Sight report and associated issues. CK has concluded that disclosure is appropriate in 10 of these cases, and a short letter has therefore been sent to each of the defence teams to bring their attention to the report. It is now a matter for the defence in each case to determine what action, if any, they might take in light of this additional information. We are also awaiting an unknown number of further historical prosecution files from Royal Mail, although at this stage we have no reason to believe these will substantially increase the number of actual disclosures. In view of the potential interest from the Criminal Cases Review Commission, we have also asked our criminal barrister, Brian Altman QC, to conduct an independent review of the overall process we have taken to review past cases, reaching the conclusion that our approach is "fundamentally sound".
- We will submit a paper to the November ARC reviewing our overall policy for investigating and prosecuting future cases. This will be informed by a separate report that Brian Altman is preparing on the effectiveness of our current prosecutions approach from a criminal law perspective, but will also take into account wider business considerations such as value for money and reputational impacts.
- The first stage of the workstream looking at improvements to our sub-postmaster training and support processes will be completed in November, identifying the key gaps and shortcomings in our current approach, a detailed plan for delivering 'quick wins' and an overarching plan for taking forward the more fundamental reforms to our organisational structure and culture over the next 6-12 months. The process will be informed by the new Branch User Forum, the inaugural meeting of which will be convened in November once the recruitment process for sub-postmasters has been completed.

Thanks
Alwen
Alwen Lyons I Company Secretary

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