

Message

From: Jane MacLeod [GRO]
on behalf of Jane MacLeod [GRO]
Sent: 01/04/2016 14:20:40
To: Tim Parker [GRO]
Subject: Post Office - Chairman's review

Tim

The following is my fortnightly update on progress on the outstanding issues from your review and general 'Sparrow' related issues:

Follow up on actions from the Report:

- Deloitte are working well with Fujitsu on the IT and accounting issues, and the team is holding weekly telephone conferences to track progress and facilitate the further work.
- Brian Altman QC has commenced his review on the legal questions and we hope to set up a conference with him shortly to discuss his likely advice.
- In relation to the allegation that our Helpline may have provided incorrect advice to subpostmasters which resulted in a loss to the accounts, the external firm conducting the work reports that they are close to completion and that, to date, no evidence to support the allegation has been uncovered.

Mediation Scheme:

The Scheme has now been closed and we are preparing an 'end of term' report which will be provided to GE and the Board in due course summarising the outcomes.

CCRC

Engagement with the CCRC is ongoing and we continue to provide information as requested. We still have no insight as to the outcome of their review.

Threatened litigation

We are aware that Freeths (the legal firm engaged by the JFSA) has written to most (if not all) of our network of post offices, inviting them to 'register' with Freeths. This is not an unexpected development given they will be seeking to maximise the number of people which will form the 'group' for the purposes of group litigation. Should this communication prompt enquiries from subpostmasters to area managers or the helplines, there is an agreed response acknowledging that we are aware of the letter and also reconfirming the various ways in which the Post Office can, and does, support subpostmasters should that they experience any difficulty in the operation of their branches and/or accounts.

We have not received any letter of claim from Freeths, and their circular to the network suggests that they remain some way off being in a position to do so. I continue to believe that there are a number of challenges they will need to address in mounting a group action, not least of which is funding. Nevertheless for the time being, we continue to reserve our position and remain alive to any developments.

Meeting with Minister

Finally, I understand that a meeting has been arranged between yourself and Baroness Neville Rolfe on 27 April. Her officials have indicated to us that the request for this meeting follows a chance encounter between the Baroness and Lord Arbuthnot, when he asked where things stood, and she agreed to meet him at some point to give him an update. We understand that she is looking for a briefing with you ahead of that meeting.

Clearly, the work in relation to the various recommendations made by Jonathan Swift will not, by that stage, be complete. We therefore need to consider carefully what information the Minister could share with Lord Arbuthnot about your investigation and its findings at that point, while recognising that it would be helpful if the Minister were able to provide him with some degree of reassurance about the content, rigour and seriousness of the exercise you are

undertaking. Accordingly we will prepare some briefing notes for your meeting with the Minister which we can discuss closer to the date should you wish.

As ever please let me know if there is anything you would like to discuss.

Kind regards,

Jane



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