

Brief for meeting with Sir Anthony Hooper, 24 September

Attachments:

- Brief for the working group chair
- CV for Sir Anthony Hooper
- Board paper from 26 July (see opening sections for recap of how we got to this point)

Overall approach to the meeting:

Given Sir Anthony's experience and seniority, it would be appropriate to conduct this as a discussion rather than as a more formal interview. We suggest you structure the conversation in three parts:

- i. Paula to open by explaining the history and rationale behind the launch of the mediation scheme and working group, and in doing so communicating the following key points:
 - that the **Post Office is deeply committed to the process**, for the benefit of both the individual sub-postmasters concerned and the wider business and its customers. This is a key part of our wider journey of cultural transformation;
 - the **role of Chair is therefore an important and rewarding role** (we need him to be enthused to ensure he is ready to approach the role with energy and vigor - and to support the fee discussions);
 - it is **also a challenging role**, with difficult judgments to make - balancing between the interests of the sub-postmasters, the wider business and the public purse - and a high degree of media/political interest (we need him to go into the role with his eyes open).
- ii. You can then open up the conversation through the types of questions outlined below, which are designed both to gain a sense of his qualities to do the job and to elicit his insights into how we approach the scheme.
- iii. You can then close the meeting with an opportunity for him to ask any further questions.

Key qualities for the role of independent chair:

- See role specification for more detail, but in essence we are looking for someone who is adept at handling complex and conflicting agendas and who is credible and rigorous as an independent chair. While some of his judgments may work against us, this credibility is important in making the judgments stick, with buy-in from all the stakeholders concerned.

Suggested questions to stimulate discussion:

- Having read the role brief and description of the mediation scheme, what are your initial thoughts on what will work and not work? How do you see this playing out? How can we set this up for success not failure?
- Are there any parallels or insights from your experience of running other mediation processes?
- While compensation may be an appropriate outcome in some cases, important to keep in mind this is essentially funded by taxpayers – therefore payments must be rigorously justified. Ultimately it will be for the Post Office to justify its stance (to sub-postmasters, MPs, BIS, the NAO) – but how can we ensure mediation process helps us to reach the right judgments?
- What concerns would you have about the role if you were to accept it?

Topics to avoid:

- Fees will be discussed with his clerk, not direct with Sir Anthony
- In talking about the other stakeholders involved (JFSA, SS, JA etc), it will be important to be neutral and suitably circumspect (not least because we know he has been briefed by Kay Linnell and may talk to her again).