
From: Mark R Davies[GRO]
Sent: Tue 23/06/2015 3:26:31 PM (UTC)
To: Alwen Lyons[GRO]
Cc: Jane MacLeod[GRO]; Paula Vennells[GRO]
Subject: RE: Panorama

Thanks Alwen. I was planning a note for Thursday but happy to move forward. At present we are still engaging, vigorously, with Panorama.

I attach a note below which could go today if you wish.

BBC PANORAMA AND THE POST OFFICE

I wanted to let you know that next week we expect further adverse media coverage (and a debate in Parliament) in relation to the Post Office and our Horizon computer system.

The BBC plans a Panorama programme on June 29 while Andrew Bridgen MP has secured a short debate in the House of Commons on the same day.

We expect both the programme and debate to include damaging and unsubstantiated allegations about Horizon and the Post Office's approach to prosecutions in those rare cases where there is evidence of branch accounts being deliberately falsified to cover up losses.

We expect allegations to be made which suggest that we pressure people to plead guilty to criminal charges, have not provided appropriate information to investigators, have the ability to remotely access and alter branch accounts and have not investigated whether Horizon could be to blame for losses in branch accounts.

We are engaging vigorously with Panorama. We provided a two hour briefing earlier this month. It has become clear, however, that they plan to continue to make damaging allegations based on individual claims, and have interviewed Second Sight in doing so.

We met with the Panorama editor on Monday and held a further call with him today. Subject to his promise to come back to us on some specific issues we will escalate further within the BBC, including with lawyers, on Wednesday.

I have held briefing session with network colleagues and a further briefing with service centres and others is to be held tomorrow. We will be using all our internal channels to reassure colleagues, including with a film featuring Angela van den Bogerd.

We are not currently planning to appear on the Panorama programme. This is because it plans to focus on three individual cases and we do not believe it is right to break the confidentiality we agreed when we set up the mediation scheme.

It is also the case that those featured in the programme have asked the Criminal Cases Review Commission, an independent body, to examine their prosecution case. That is their right and we will co-operate fully with any requests made of us: what we won't do is indulge in a public debate while that review is being conducted.

We have, however, provided the programme and its journalists with huge amounts of information which we hope will be reflected fairly and accurately. I will circulate our statement later this week.

If we are asked to comment on the Panorama allegations on other channels, we will do so.

I hope this is helpful. If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes
Mark

From: Alwen Lyons
Sent: 23 June 2015 16:14
To: Mark R Davies
Cc: Jane MacLeod; Paula Vennells
Subject: FW: Panorama

Please see Alice's email. I have assured her that we will brief the Board on the Panorama programme and the adjournment debate

Thanks

Alwen



Alwen Lyons
Company Secretary

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From: Alice Perkins [GRO]
Sent: 23 June 2015 15:28
To: Alwen Lyons
Subject: Panorama

Hi Alwen,
I am sure this will be in hand but can you please make sure the Board is fully aware of what is happening and how we have been handling it? Neil M said to me last Thursday that he was unsighted on it till then. I don't want any of them caught unawares when it's being trailed etc etc.
Many thanks
Alice