

THE POSTCODE ADDRESS FILE ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

Minutes of meeting held at 13:00 on 19th January 2017

At the offices of Experian, George West House,

2-3 Clapham Common North Side, London SW4 0QL

PRESENT

Ian Beesley	Chairman
Iain McKay	Improvement Service, Scotland
Darren McDonnell	Mail Users' Association
Jason Goodwin	Experian
Carolyn Valder	CACI
Tim Drye	Direct Marketing Association
Ian Paterson	Mail Competition Forum
Dan Cooper	Allies Computing Ltd
Paul Roberts	Secretary to the Board

Also in attendance

Scott Childes	AMU	(items 5 – 11)
Ian Evans	AMU	(items 5 – 11)

Apologies

James Mitchell	Royal Mail Group
David Heyes	Wigan BC
Alun Evans	Racer Ltd

Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed attendees to the 1st PAB meeting for 2017 and introduced Darren McDonnell from OTM Ltd, a new Board member replacing Melanie Allsop as representative of the Mail Users' Association.

1. Matters Arising

PAB(16)5th meeting minutes

Key Outstanding PAB Actions

Government Digital Service: Board members reported that the Government GDS office was still in transition.

Public Sector Licence renewal: Feedback from a number of sources suggested that the existing PSL framework may roll forward for one year.

ACTION: The Chairman and Secretary to produce an article for placement on the PAB website, outlining PAB's understanding of the current position and detailing any concerns/ calls to action

PAF Pricing: PAB members highlighted significant concerns around potential impending PAF pricing revisions, as many budgets for 2017/18 had already been set.

The PAB were keen to encourage the AMU to produce an ongoing pricing story for stakeholders and users that included efficiency initiatives as well as core price rise details.

The PAB also stated a desire to have pricing set for minimum periods longer than one year, with an assurance from the AMU that, where practicable, price rises would be no higher than RPI increases. Board members discussed the actions open to PAB if price rises and contract terms were set at higher thresholds. The Chairman outlined the role of PAB in influencing strategic stakeholder discussions and to alert Ofcom if the PAB viewed increases as unreasonable.

2. Chairman's update

The Chairman advised that Royal Mail was discussing internal management of the PO Box service, and that potentially this could come under the AMUs control in future. The PAB agreed to monitor on an ongoing basis.

Feedback from various stakeholders had indicated that the Open Data initiatives involving addressing had reduced importance in the overall Open Data strategy. The PAB view was that the market had become more selective on addressing-related open data, focusing more closely on datasets that could be updated effectively and quality maintained.

3. PAB areas of focus for 2017

The Board members each gave inputs on activities that the PAB might focus on in 2017:

- Driving innovation in PAF.
- An enhanced focus on the quality of PAF – including what is contained within the file in addition to core data accuracy and quality
- Driving enhanced engagement between the AMU and the marketplace to ensure PAF users understood what the various datasets within the file mean. An example of this was the 'Alias' file.
- An increased focus on responsiveness speeds within Royal Mail. An example of this was the timescale for moving Not Yet Built data to the standard PAF once it had been identified that the address was available to receive mail
- Driving the AMU to produce and discuss clearer information on areas where users have difficulty working with PAF and the activities undertaken by Royal Mail to resolve those types of issues
- Driving an increased emphasis on the AMU to focus on analysis of information in addition to representing the core numbers, thus driving more strategic action.
- Developing a better understanding of the relationship between the AMU and RM Operations.
- Driving better understanding of how non-PAF data that Royal Mail generates interfaces with PAF, including the use made of Mailmark.

ACTION: The Chairman to make a formal request to the AMU to update the PAB on data innovation within Royal Mail, including the division between the AMU and Royal Mail Data Services.

ACTION: The Secretary to draft and Chairman to send a request for the AMU to update the PAB on key elements of the AMU's 2017/18 plan – staff structure, goals, objectives and actions.

4. Market Research Opportunities

Tim Drye updated the Board on current marketing & analytics activity from the DMA's perspective.

- The ONS and the DMA were engaged in ongoing discussions regarding the processing of complex data. At present, PAF was identified as a 'bottleneck' compared to some other datasets. Hence, the ONS would be invited to attend a future PAB meeting.
- Ongoing research indicated that there were an increasing number of areas where a postcode was not now required to identify location and that PAF may need to adjust to deal with the changing ways used by businesses to identify users/ customers.

- Research indicated that PAF could be configured in different ways [example indexing]. This could potentially drive opportunities to licence PAF in different ways [example: similar to the Sat Nav licensing model]

5. PAF quarterly audit process and quarter 4 results

AMU & DQM

DQM gave a presentation on the independent research process of conducting quarterly PAF quality audits.

Each quarter, DQM selected 3 postcode areas to review on a field research basis, based on city, urban and rural segmentation, and covering one area from within each of the Royal Mail operating regions [North, East and West]. Field research of 20 thoroughfares per postcode area was completed, with focus on analysing variance from PAF - missing properties, duplicated address details, missing address components, incorrect application of postcode.

Output measurements included completeness of property data, changes required and thoroughfare name accuracy.

Wider database analysis was also undertaken to examine issues of consistency with PAF.

Results were used to improve the quality of PAF and enable a focus for each postcode area on local data gathering improvement opportunities and actions.

4 quarters of research had been completed to date. DQM reported that the quality of result generated varied through the first 2 quarters of research, mainly due to teething troubles. Over the latest 2 quarters, result quality had been consistent due to consistency of address definitions used.

DQM and the AMU confirmed that on completion of 4 quarters of research undertaken under consistent address definitions, the data gathered would include enough trend and cross-organisation information to drive wider strategic action across Royal Mail.

The DQM view of onward considerations included ensuring the methodology remained consistent (so that the data gathered could be analysed on a like-for-like basis) and the scope & scale of field research vs other PAF data quality checks.

The AMU confirmed the areas for the following quarter research would be Harrogate, Slough and Worcester

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to update the PAB on application of the Alias file within the wider PAF dataset.

ACTION: The Board invited DQM to share the presentation with individual Board members for further review and feedback/ input

6. Possible Financial Futures for PAF

AMU

The AMU updated the PAB on PAF pricing developments.

The AMU explained that price changes were necessary as a result of a revenue gap due to greater than expected levels of migration from User based to Transactional based licensing. The PAB view was that the marketplace may well react negatively to any price increases greater than the Retail Price Index since the existing prices were announced.

The AMU confirmed they would be discussing the increases with OFCOM and the PAB. The proposals were currently expected to be sent to the PAB in February.

The PAB requested that any consultation papers sent to the PAB included a wider rationale for price changes, not just core price change information

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to circulate pricing consultation papers to the PAB as soon as practicable.

The AMU also updated the Board on the current position regarding Public Sector Licence renewal.

The AMU explained that none of the three parties involved wanted the current arrangements to come to an end and that, as a result, they did not envisage that the Agreement would not be renewed. The AMU also confirmed that they were looking at the terms of the renewal.

The AMU also confirmed that they were in the process of finalising communications to PAF solution providers on the current position and that they were working closely with market users to ensure the communications were appropriate.

The Board took note of the AMU statements.

7. Business Address Check Update

AMU

The AMU advised that one full cycle of business address checks had now been completed.

Circa. 1.57 million check forms had been circulated, with circa 281k returned. Circa. 138k of the returns generated some form of change in PAF with circa 59k of the changes requiring a change of business name (3.8% of the total mailing).

The AMU outlined their plans to conduct a further cycle of business address checks, from May 2017, and were keen for the PAB to input on the process.

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to circulate slides of the business address check results to Board members for review.

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to circulate the existing address check card to gather inputs for any potential amendments or additions that could be used to support the next cycle of business address checks.

8. Data Security

The Chairman led a discussion on data security, outlining how the issues surrounding data security had evolved over time (including increased hacking of systems and misuse of individuals' data) and questioning whether PAF security had matured in line with ongoing evolution of the issue.

The AMU confirmed there was an ongoing project to review data security protocols and that the results would be communicated to the PAB.

The Board recommended that the AMU communicate with the marketplace on a regular basis to assure them that PAF data security is reviewed and enhanced on an ongoing basis.

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to provide an update at the next PAB meeting on more detail of ongoing data security activity.

9. Taking the Pulse of PAF

AMU

The Board took note of the latest issue of the Pulse.

10. AOB - Mail Audience Research Board (MARB)

Ian Paterson briefly updated the Board on establishment of the MARB, which was to be launched later this year. The MARB would review and promote use of data generated from various data sources (to later include Mailmark barcode data).

The Board requested that Ian Paterson update the Board as appropriate as things developed.

11. Next Meeting

13:00 to 16:30 on 16th March 2017 at the offices of Royal Mail (location to be confirmed)