

THE POSTCODE ADDRESS FILE ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

Minutes of meeting held at 13:00 on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019

At GB Group, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 128 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4BJ

PRESENT

Ian Beesley	Chairman
Dan Cooper	Allies Computing
Carolyn Valder	CACI
Paul Malyon	Experian
David Green	GB Group
Iain McKay	Improvement Service, Scotland
Jason Goodwin	Landmark Group
Ian Paterson	Mail Competition Forum
Charles Neilson	Mail Competition Forum
Darren McDonnell	Mail Users Association
Judith Donovan	Strategic Mailing Partnership
Paul Roberts	Secretary

Apologies

Tim Drye	Direct Marketing Association
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## 1. Matters arising

Scottish Census Trial Report. The report on the trial was expected to be ready for the January PAB meeting. Iain McKay advised that funding for work on gazetteer & postcode matching in Scotland had been approved and that the trial had contributed to the case for funding.

## 2. Chairman's Update

The Chairman reported that Steve Rooney, Head of the Address Management Unit (AMU), was in the process of taking on responsibility for service support in the wholesale division (DSACC) and would continue to head the AMU. The Board welcomed Royal Mail's commitment to continuity of personnel working with the PAB.

## 3. Mailmark Error Trials

Charles Neilson advised that a more streamlined approach to the trial had been agreed and that 5,000 business mail items had been sent as a test sample.

Darren McDonnell confirmed that OTM had loaded data into their mailing software which had achieved 96% postcode accuracy. Delivery point information was less accurate, and more analysis would be undertaken to establish possible causes for lower matching accuracy, including a review of the logic used within the addressing software.

Once the causes of matching failure at DPS level had been identified and eliminated as far as possible, the data would then be sent to the AMU for analysis against PAF.

The Board recommended that if there was an issue with the logic in the matching software it would be for consideration whether a message could be sent to the marketplace drawing attention to the modifications made to the mailing software logic for optimal B2B addressing.

**ACTION:** The Board thanked Charles Neilson and Darren McDonnell for their efforts on the test to date and invited Charles to provide a further progress update at the January PAB meeting.

## 4. Royal Mail Cost Allocation

Charles Neilson advised he had attended an OFCOM workshop on 10<sup>th</sup> October relating to the transparency of cost allocation through the Royal Mail operational pipeline. He had raised the issue of volatility in central cost allocations on the AMU profit and loss accounts. Ofcom had suggested the PAB meet with them to discuss overhead cost allocations relating to the AMU & PAF and how this could affect PAF product offerings or pricing.

**ACTION:** The Chairman to contact Ofcom to set up a meeting early in 2020 to discuss cost allocation and other issues).

PAB members raised the issue of whether the service level agreement (SLA) for PAF validation between the AMU and Royal Mail Operations was still appropriate or needed revision.

**ACTION:** The Chairman to discuss the SLA with the AMU.

## 5. Business Data Quality Research

The Chairman advised that a supplier to conduct the research had not yet been sourced, despite much contact and efforts by Board members in their respective networks. Board members suggested four potential options for consideration.

**ACTION:** The Chairman to liaise with the four potential suppliers.

## 6. PAB Areas of Focus for 2020

## Ensemble

The PAB discussed main themes and areas for the Board to consider during 2020:

- I. The portfolio and content of PAF licences  
In particular, the need to move from an annual Public Sector Licence (PSL) agreement with government to a multi-annual agreement more in keeping with market requirements.
- II. The content and accuracy of PAF  
In the light of the rapid pace of application of new technologies (for example in the development of smart cities), it would be valuable to review the content and availability of PAF and PAF-related files such as NYB, MR and the PAF Alias file.
- III. PAF delivery channels and returns  
The Board agreed that PAF delivery channels were appropriate for current use but felt that the returns process could be reviewed to encourage end users to incorporate PAF updates at least monthly.
- IV. Marketing PAF  
Could the AMU and RM websites be of greater use in promoting the use of PAF through better search engine optimisation or better use of analytics?
- V. Communicating the value of good addressing  
The Board questioned whether the current good addressing standards were still appropriate given market and societal developments. A review could include items such as address format & layout.
- VI. Maximising Royal Mail's data assets  
The Board discussed how Royal Mail could potentially maximise some of its wider data assets (for example, by linking returned mail data with addressing standards and PAF). PAB members also raised the issue of what is contained within the ring-fence of public interest data vs commercial data and whether this is still appropriate.
- VII. Wider Benchmarking of AMU/PAF  
Board members asked how the AMU benchmark themselves against other organisations in terms of the overall product and service offering. The Chairman advised that the PAB carried out an international benchmarking study some years ago which might merit updating.

VIII. PAB Terms of Reference

It would be valuable to review the PAB's own terms of reference during 2020.

IX. Raising the profile of PAB

The Board discussed how the PAB brand could be further promoted and agreed that there would be value in working with the AMU to see whether references to PAB could be promoted more widely in AMU communications with customers. Consideration should also be given to resurrecting the PAB Open Day meetings with attendance by invitation.

**ACTIONS:**

- a) The Chairman to liaise with Ordnance Survey with the intention of discussing the implications of smart cities at a future PAB meeting.
- b) The Chairman to seek OFCOM's views on the scope of ring-fenced data.
- c) The Chairman to discuss other opportunities identified above with the AMU.
- d) The Secretary to circulate the earlier international bench-marking studies of addressing data.

**7. 2020 PAB Dates**

The PAB dates for 2020 were confirmed as 30<sup>th</sup> January, 30<sup>th</sup> April, 25<sup>th</sup> June and 29<sup>th</sup> October.

**8. Next meeting**

11:00 on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020, to be held at the offices of Experian, Friars House, 160 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8EZ, followed by a lunch to welcome the New Year.