

THE POSTCODE ADDRESS FILE ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

Minutes of meeting held at 13:00 on 15th July 2020

By video conference

PRESENT

Ian Beesley	Chairman
Ian Paterson	Mail Competition Forum
Iain McKay	Improvement Service, Scotland
Carolyn Valder	CACI
Charles Neilson	Mail Competition Forum
Nick Chapallaz	GeoPlace
Judith Donovan	Strategic Mailing Partnership
Dan Cooper	Allies Computing (items 3-9)
Stephen Goodsell	Royal Mail Group (items 3-9)
Tim Drye	Direct Marketing Association (items 1–5)
Paul Malyon	Experian (items 1–5)
Paul Roberts	Secretary

Also in attendance

Ian Evans	AMU
Tom Foyle	AMU
Steve Rooney	AMU (items 2-9)
Tony Lamb	Lamb Direct Consulting (Item 4)

Apologies

David Green	GB Group
Jason Goodwin	Landmark Group
Paul Brough	Mail Users Association

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 3rd meeting of the PAB for 2020 and formally announced Paul Brough from Baker Goodchild (representing the Mail Users Association), Nick Chapallaz from GeoPlace and Stephen Goodsell from Royal Mail Group as new PAB members.

2. Matters Arising

PAB (20)1st meeting minutes

- a) AMU SLA with RM Operations. The SLA review group had been formed and was waiting for a context paper from the AMU to enable the review to commence

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to liaise with the Secretary to agree the format for the paper.

- b) PAB membership. Local Authority representation had not yet been confirmed.

ACTION: The Secretary to follow up with David Heyes (ex-PAB member) to identify potential members.

- c) PAB meeting with Ofcom. The Chairman confirmed this had been held in abeyance due to Covid-19 impacts and could now be progressed. The Board re-confirmed that this meeting should include discussion on Royal Mail cost allocation and scope of regulation across PAF and associated datasets.

ACTION: The Chairman to follow up with Ofcom to arrange the meeting.

- d) Benchmarking of PAF. The Chairman advised that the activity had been suspended in light of Covid-19 impacts, but exploration of options would now be re-started.

ACTION: The Chairman to follow up with AMU to identify potential options for conducting benchmarking activity/ research.

- e) PAB Terms of Reference. The Board confirmed that they would like to review the Terms of Reference

ACTION: The Secretary to re-circulate the existing Terms document to gather feedback for onward discussion.

3. Chairman's Update

Chairman

'The Address Book'

The Chairman had read 'The Address Book' by Deirdre Mask and noted that there was no apparent mention of PAF within the text.

ACTION: The Chairman to contact the publishers to ask whether a summary of PAF value could be included or associated with the book.

Royal Mail Management Restructuring

Further to recent media stories regarding ongoing Royal Mail management restructuring. The AMU advised that any potential impacts within the AMU operation in support of PAF were currently being discussed and that they would advise the PAB once any further detail was confirmed.

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to update the PAB once further clarity on potential impacts was known.

4. PAF Business Address Quality

Tony Lamb

Tony Lamb from Lamb Direct Consulting, who had been appointed to carry out independent research on business address match quality with PAF, presented a summary of the report that had been produced.

Key conclusions of the report were:

- Adding an accurate business name to the address enhanced the matching accuracy of the data and enabled more effective mail delivery
- Multi-occupancy business premises were more difficult to obtain a match, due to there being one physical delivery point with multiple addresses.
- Current levels of Business Names accuracy in PAF make it difficult to achieve the address matching rates required for discounts for B2B mailings.

Recommendations included:

- Confirmation that accurate business names should be kept as part of PAF, possibly involving the development of a separate business names file.
- A more thorough and regular audit of business address accuracy within PAF
- Usage of external data sources to enhance business name accuracy

PAB members highlighted the need for Royal Mail to not only report address match failures, but also to investigate and report on the reasons for failures,

The Board formally accepted the report, praising the scope and quality of the report produced, and thanked Tony Lamb for all his efforts. A copy of the report is in the papers section of the PAB website.

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to formally respond to the report, including the recommendations contained, for discussion at the next PAB meeting

ACTION: The Chairman invited PAB members to share the report with their stakeholder groups, following publication of the report.

5. Communication the Value of PAF & Good addressing AMU

The AMU reported they were further developing plans to target communications on the added value of PAF, highlighting specific elements to particular audiences.

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to share the plans once formed to enable PAB awareness, and potential input and suggestions.

The AMU advised that they had commissioned a video on 'how to address well and present mail in the best ways'. The video was in final draft form and was planned to be ready by the end of July. The video would then be shared through multiple media channels across customer groups and also shared internally within the Royal Mail Group for inclusion within relevant onward communications.

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to share the video with the PAB once ready

6. Price Increases

AMU

The AMU reported that the timescale for licence price increases had been re-set to October 2020, with communications being sent to customers on 1st June. There had been little feedback from customers regarding the increases, with the only real feedback being that the re-introduction of price increases had been expected, as was the timetable for introduction of the new pricing.

Dan Cooper questioned the process and timing for subsequent price changes. The AMU advised they were currently seeking input from SPs and the wider customer base on price reviews for 2021 and would welcome PAB input.

Charles Neilson questioned why PAF price increases were not implemented in line with the timings for most other price increases across RMG. The AMU responded that keeping the pricing review separate from the pricing decisions of the main RM products, allowed them to get support from RM's central team at a less busy time, and also demonstrated that the decision making was independent in-line with the ringfence position of the Unit.

7. Scottish Census Trial Report

Iain McKay

Iain McKay updated the PAB on the results from the Scottish Census Trial. The overall delivery failure rate was <2% for the three sample areas. A number of reasons had been identified for these delivery failures with "address inaccessible" being the largest cause. It was noted that reasons for failure were recorded by the post person.

It was not obvious why some of the failures had occurred and all instances were currently being investigated. Iain advised that the Improvement Service, National Records for Scotland (responsible for the Census in Scotland) and the AMU would work together going forward to identify root causes and potential actions.

ACTION: The Board invited Iain McKay and the AMU to update the Board further once actions were identified.

8. Impacts of Covid-19 Across PAF Stakeholders **Ensemble**

Many Board members and the AMU advised that the main impact noticed of the pandemic had been a change to employee ways of working, with more remote working and collaboration, with productivity remaining high in the short-term.

Judith Donovan advised that the Strategic Mailing Partnership had produced a report on trends during the pandemic. The main themes were:

- Some mailing houses were being asked by organisations to quote to take over mail provision from internal mailing services, with corresponding little current appetite to take mailing activity back 'in-house'
- An enhanced focus on validation that mail items were 'clean' i.e. free from infections
- Mailing houses would be increasingly likely to turn away mail due to unreasonable expectations on turnaround speeds
- Due to consumer online uptake being accelerated through the pandemic, it was anticipated that speed of update to data and processes, impacting on accuracy being monitored, maintained and enhanced on a much more regular basis.
- The overall feel was that volumes will be smaller, route to market needs will be quicker, digital will be more dominant and not everyone in the supply chain will survive

Dan Cooper reported that there had been a reduction in web service lookups at the immediate time of lockdown, but the usage had recovered and was now operating at normal levels.

The AMU reported that Solutions Provider activity volumes had been fairly steady during the pandemic. Some Direct End Users had ceased trading for up to 3 months, but most were now back working. The AMU also advised that it was too early yet to identify any impact in the rate of switching from User to Transactional based PAF usage. The AMU had also received an increase in requests for help from tertiary sector customers, especially charities, and had supported these where possible.

9. Next meeting

13:00 on 29th October 2020. Likely to be held by video conference, to be advised closer to the meeting date.