

THE POSTCODE ADDRESS FILE ADVISORY BOARD (PAB)

Minutes of meeting held at 11:45 on 19 January 2023

At the offices of Auctane, 200 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8XZ

And by video conference

Present

Ian Beesley	Chairman
Neil Haydock	Auctane
Paul Cresswell	Experian
Paul Brough	Mail Users' Association
Ron Wilkinson	Improvement Service, Scotland
Nick Chapallaz	GeoPlace
Ian Paterson	Mail Competition Forum
Charles Neilson	Mail Competition Forum
Stuart Watt	GB Group
Rob Parker	CACI
Dan Cooper	Allies Computing
Paul Roberts	Board Secretary

In attendance

Ian Evans	AMU
Tom Foyle	AMU

Apologies

Steve Goodsell	Royal Mail Group
Tim Drye	Direct Marketing Association

1 Pre-reading Materials – Comments & Questions

a. Business Names Activity

The PAB welcomed the improvements to processing success rates resulting from the pre-filtering of the data.

The AMU advised that analysis of Companies House data had reduced in December but was now working at or exceeding normal activity levels.

Board members asked what progress had been made using business rates data. The AMU advised this was currently being piloted with the York local authority dataset and that they would update the PAB once the filtering and processing of data had been completed.

The Board recommended that use of business rates data should be reviewed by GeoPlace and the AMU, in addition to existing work on Not Yet Built (NYB) to PAF measurements.

Board members requested the addition of longer-term trend data to the circulated business name data

ACTION: The Secretary to convene the next meeting of the PAB Business Names Working Group (BNWG)

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to add cumulative and rolling trend data to the individual monthly business names data already produced

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to provide a further update at the April 2023 PAB meeting, including the use of business rates data.

b. Licensing Trends

The Board expressed surprise that direct licensing remained at a steady rate of 10%. The AMU advised that, while there was turnover within those customers who license directly, there was no obvious reason why the percentage remained consistent in this way.

2 Presentation by Auctane

Neil Haydock gave a short presentation on the range and remit of the Auctane Group and its main brands (including Metapack, stamps.com and many other).

Key activities of the Group include providing user interfaces between customers and carriers, and solutions to enable payment, across a broad client base across industry sectors.

The Board asked how Auctane validate any addressing data used, and Neil confirmed that PAF is used as one of the inputs.

ACTION: The Chairman and Neil Haydock to discuss whether any international data used by Auctane could be used to support international addressing benchmarking.

3 The Link Between PAF and Postcode Finder

The Chairman had identified an issue where inputting a specific suburban address had not created a match using the Postcode Finder tool on royalmail.com. The AMU advised that the current specification of Postcode Finder does not include reference to locality alias data which would have overcome this particular issue. The issue would affect searches for addresses in large post towns.

The AMU reported they would be collaborating with the RM Digital Team involved in the design, management, and maintenance of the RM Postcode (Address) Finder to identify whether locality alias data could feature in the reference data used within the Postcode Finder solution.

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to provide an update on progress of discussions in the next inter-PAB report or for the next PAB meeting.

4 PAF Comms Programme

Further to previous Board discussions on the AMU-driven campaign to ensure key PAF quality messages were communicated with and understood by RM Operational staff.

The AMU reported that the initial campaign, planned to run from March/ April for a number of months, would feature three main strands:

- Broadcasting on the internal RMTV service
- Articles in forthcoming internal RM communications materials
- Face to face listening and learning sessions in RM delivery offices.

Videos were being prepared and interviews with stakeholders arranged, to enhance the impact of messages.

The Board suggested that messages could be enhanced by being targeted to different employee profiles, especially longer-term vs inexperienced staff in RM delivery offices.

Board members discussed how measurements would be used to evaluate success of the programme. The AMU advised that measures were currently under development and would include movement in the average level of changes to PAF submitted for specific areas, and testing of employee awareness and understanding.

ACTION: PAB members to provide suggestions for stakeholder interview questions and pre-and post-campaign measurements of success to the Chairman by 3 February.

5 Initiative to Improve the Accuracy and Currency of Residential Addressing

Further to a letter sent by the Chairman to the AMU on 5 January, which shared suggestions and ideas from the PAB on initiatives that might improve the currency and accuracy of PAF data. The AMU thanked the PAB for the suggestions and indicated that they had started to draw up a plan as to how some of these might be introduced. The PAB requested that a full response be submitted at the April 2023 PAB meeting.

ACTION: The Board invited the AMU to provide a response to the Chairman's letter at their earliest convenience.

6 Public Sector Licence (PSL)

The AMU reported that they had submitted proposals covering 1,3 and 5-year options for the PSL terms, to the Geospatial Commission and Scottish Representatives, and had met with the groups during week commencing 9 January.

At this stage, neither the AMU or the relevant commissions were expecting any issues that would prevent a continuation of the current operation of the PSL and were focused on attempting to secure longer term agreements where possible.

Board members asked that, in the event of a longer-term agreement, how would the AMU be able to confirm that the pricing model was correct. The AMU advised that price rises in the PSL had remained consistent with the levels in private sector licensing and did not envision this would change, although they would regularly be assessing economic conditions to ensure PSL pricing was fair.

Board members asked whether the proposals continued to include access to and use of the Not Yet Build and Multiple Residence datasets, and the AMU confirmed that they did.

7 Scottish Census Update

Ron Wilkinson gave a brief update on the use of addressing data in the Scottish Census held in Spring 2022.

AddressBase and PAF were used to match addresses. Where there was no initial match, Local Authority data was used to supplement the other data sets.

The response rate was lower than the England & Wales Census, despite it being a legal requirement. However, there were no addressing issues identified as contributing to the lower than anticipated return levels. Some lower-volume and low-severity issues identified included:

- Duplicate address records in some cases (including business at residential addresses)
- Accuracy of some flat/ apartment addresses (especially in older tenement type buildings)
- Vacant properties
- Incorrect address categorisation (e.g. not a residential address)
- Recipient refusals to complete the census form

The AMU confirmed they work with Local Authorities where historical addressing and 'difficult' addresses were identified.

The Board thanked Ron for the update.

8 Format of PAB Minutes

The Board reviewed the level and detail of data being published on the PAB website. The consensus of opinion was that the present approach should continue.

9 Next Meeting

20 April 2023, 13:00 – 15:00, by video conference.