

POLICY ADVISORY BOARD REPORT  
PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON, W1  
5 February 2003

MEETING 24

Those present:

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Jeremy Beale   | Appointed Member                         |
| Adam Beaumont  | Elected Member                           |
| Denesh Bhabuta | Elected Member                           |
| Alex Bligh     | Appointed Member - Council of Management |
| James Cronin   | Elected Member                           |
| Steve Dyer     | Appointed Member - Council of Management |
| Peter Gradwell | Elected Member                           |
| Ben Laurie     | Elected Member                           |
| Mark Lewis     | Appointed Member                         |
| Eric Ramage    | Appointed Member                         |
| Sue White      | Appointed Member                         |

From Nominet by invitation of the PAB:

Gareth Cook, Communications Executive  
Lesley Cowley, Managing Director  
Jay Daley, Director of IT

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Richard Almeida, Gordon Dick, Michael Duggan and Clive Feather.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The meeting reports for the October and December meetings were approved.

3. Matters arising/updates from last meeting

The Chair requested a review of the progress of previous PAB recommendations:

- a. Additional organisations joining the PAB - Peter Gradwell is in the process of inviting representatives from Business Link, OFCOM, the office of the e-envoy and the National Consumers Council to join the PAB.
- b. Existing organisations - the existing organisations will continue to serve on the PAB. Mark Lewis from Companies House was welcomed to the meeting. He and Sue White will now attend alternate meetings.
- c. NOM-STEER: subscribing and unsubscribing - there is a long-term strategy that will enable members to subscribe and unsubscribe automatically.
- d. NOM-STEER archive - Jay Daley reported that this is now ready to be put live onto the new Nominet website and will be available very soon. In the first instance the archive will not be searchable but that will follow in due course.
- e. Publication of PGP key - Jay Daley reported that this will be dealt with as part of an online system for members and is included in the Technical Strategy project list.

f. PRSS consultation - Lesley Cowley reported that there were 8 responses to the consultation in total. The responses were generally supportive of the plans and some had even suggested that the limits we had set were too lenient. Lesley confirmed that current PRSS users had been invited to respond to the consultation, and that one had done so.

#### 4. PAB purpose and definition paper

Peter Gradwell presented the new version of this paper and explained that sections on 'proxies', 'quorums', 'conflicts of interest' and 'press communication' had been added since the previous draft.

The number required for a quorum was briefly discussed and Eric Ramage suggested that an odd number was better than an even number, so that when there are votes there would be a clear outcome rather than the Chair having to make a casting vote.

Recommendation:

The PAB recommended the adoption of the PAB purpose and definition paper, with the substitution under the section 'Quorum' of the first sentence for "In order to achieve a quorum, there shall be at least 7 members at a meeting."

#### 5. PAB communications and consultation paper

Peter Gradwell presented this paper which was intended to outline the principles for the way the PAB communicates on various issue and to formalise their reporting.

Alex Bligh had sent the only response to the document and Peter Gradwell will incorporate his changes in a second draft.

In particular it was felt that there needed to be a clear structure for how the PAB carries out consultations. The structure of consultation needs to be more accessible, so that consumers can understand how consultation works. Alex Bligh suggested that a diagram and timeline for each consultation would help with this.

Recommendation:

The PAB supports the general recommendations of the PAB Communication & Consultation paper, but feels there are further issues of drafting, presentation, and substance. The PAB believes that the requirements for documenting a formal structure need to be balanced against those of simplicity, comprehensibility and convenience. The PAB asks Peter Gradwell to present another draft incorporating these views. The PAB requests the assistance of Nominet's communications department in redrafting the document. The PAB thus makes no formal recommendation to the CoM at this stage.

#### 6. Summary of Technical Strategy paper

Jay Daley presented this paper and prefaced it by explaining that the document is more concerned with project management rather than technical strategy.

He explained that there was now a proper process and that all tasks were documented and properly prioritised across the whole business. The summary paper outlines how this was done.

Jay also went through the summarised project plan which lists the projects that were most likely to interest and affect Nominet members.

James Cronin thanked Jay for presenting the paper and suggested that it would be very useful to make the information available to members on a quarterly basis. Members could then plan in advance relating to changes to external facing systems.

Recommendation:

The PAB recommends that Nominet publish a quarterly report summarizing upcoming changes to business & technical systems which are likely to affect interfaces with members and other stakeholders.

#### 7. .net.uk paper

No paper was presented. Peter Gradwell and Alex Bligh briefly explained the history relating to the .net.uk sub-committee. The sub-committee's original proposals had not been accepted by the PAB or CoM and they met again in September to discuss the matter again. There had been no further communication from the sub-committee since.

Alex Bligh explained that although the sub-committee had decided to consult on .net.uk and devised some questions, the consultation did not actually take place.

A discussion then took place within the meeting to try and determine what action should be taken. The discussion highlighted the difficulties faced by any group attempting to consult on the issue or proposing a solution.

Recommendation:

The PAB recommends that no changes be made to the rules for .net.uk at the present time, because the issues are not sufficiently tractable for consultation to be an effective use of time and resources. The PAB recommends that Nominet re-examine the charges for .net.uk registrations on the basis of cost recovery as part of the next pricing review.

#### 8. Updates from other sub-committees

##### .me.uk

The sub-committee met on 21 January, and a consultation paper is currently being written.

Tony Willoughby, Chair of Nominet's panel of DRS independent experts had attended the meeting and suggested that Nominet could introduce a procedure for registrants to complain about cases where the domain name registration rules have been broken. The procedure would be more lightweight than the current DRS and easier to operate as there would only be one party involved.

It had been suggested that if such a process could be introduced, it would be ideal for .me.uk cases.

Recommendation:

The PAB notes that the me.uk changes are yet to go to consultation, and thus makes no recommendations at this time.

The PAB recommends that Nominet investigate a formal procedure by which members of the public can ask Nominet to investigate breaches by registrants of the rules of registration.

Wait list service

This sub-committee would meet after the PAB meeting.

9. Matters arising from nom-steer and pab-suggest

There were no matters arising.

10. Urgent business

Lesley Cowley was asked about who was standing in the forthcoming PAB elections. Three of the four elected representatives due for re-election were standing again, along with four other candidates.

Gordon Dick is not standing for re-election and the PAB recorded a vote of thanks to him for his service. They also offered their condolences following his recent bereavement.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Wednesday 2 April 2002.