



**NOMINET**

## **.UK Policy Stakeholder Committee Meeting**

17<sup>th</sup> March 2016

**Attendees:** David Abrahams; Carolyn Kimber; Pete McDougall (dialling-in); Abigail Saul; Dave Thomas

**Apologies:** Liz Coll; Richard Hyde; Vicki Nash; Gilad Rosner

**Nominet Policy Team:** Leanne Kenny; Richard Plater

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### **Welcome**

The Policy Team welcomed Abi from the Information Commissioner's Office back to the Committee following a break. The Policy Team gave a brief recap of the recent internal restructure of the team and noted that having a smaller team has required them to consider what aspects of their work should be prioritised going forward. It was noted that stakeholder engagement and supporting the work of the Stakeholder Committee would remain key priorities.

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### **Lyons Review**

The Policy Team gave a brief summary of the Lyons review and highlighted the specific recommendations relating to stakeholder engagement which are of particular interest to the Committee and the way it works.

The group then held a discussion focused on reviewing the scope of the Committee's remit, its composition, how it operates, as well as how to increase the transparency of its work. Committee members were asked to consider what changes or improvements in these areas might help Nominet meet aspects of the Lyons recommendations.

### *Remit*

Committee members commented that their work on the Committee had given them a broadened knowledge of Nominet and the company's work. The members present agreed that it was not within the Committee's remit to hold Nominet to account for the policy decisions made. It was noted that as policy decisions are made by the Nominet Board, this provides an avenue for input from appointed and member elected non-executive directors to sit alongside views from the company's executive. The Committee's remit was originally envisaged as an advocacy role whereby members would raise awareness of Nominet, the work of the company, and the

company's policy development process amongst their networks of stakeholders. Committee member's confirmed that they appreciate the value they can add via this role and some added that this defined remit provided safeguards for them against attempts to lobby from those wishing to influence Nominet policy decisions. The Policy Team added that they greatly valued the Committee as a sounding board to test policy thinking or proposed approaches to policy development work.

It was also noted that there could be a number of policy influences affecting the company's more diversified business areas, such as the Internet of Things, and it might be worth considering extending the Committee's remit into areas beyond .UK policy issues. The committee members present indicated that they would be willing to fulfil such a broadened role.

### *Transparency*

The group discussed potential options for increasing transparency and awareness of the Committee's work. The publication of meeting summaries had already been suggested by the Policy Team in addition to having been requested via some member forum posts. Committee members agreed that this may help. They also acknowledged, however, that the confidential nature of some of the discussions, along with the wish to ensure that committee members continued to feel able to give their advice freely, represented challenges for publishing full minutes. With these issues in mind, an approach whereby Nominet produced a summary report focusing on the key points of discussion and where comments were not attributed to specific committee members was favoured.

### *Composition*

The group agreed that it would be useful to increase the number of committee members. This would both broaden the number of perspectives represented on the Committee and help ensure a robust presence at meetings given the busy schedules of many of the members. It was agreed a useful approach would be to identify the types of skills and expertise new members would need in order to contribute positively to the work of the Committee. New members could then be appointed on the basis of their being able to bring at least one of these qualities to the Committee. The skills or areas of expertise initially identified were:

- Understanding of technology
- Understanding of public policy making or a public policy specialism
- Understanding of different stakeholder groups impacted by Nominet policy

The Committee acknowledged the value a number of Nominet Member Registrars had brought as committee members due to their industry experience. It was felt, however, that ensuring a diversity of viewpoints and experience amongst committee members was more important than specifically targeting representatives from the Nominet Member Registrar community for appointment to the Committee.

### *Operation of the Committee*

There was a short discussion on the various operational aspects of how the Committee works. The group agreed that the Policy Team should draft a discussion paper for circulation amongst

Committee members for discussion at the next Conference call. The paper should also invite views from the Committee as to a possible name change to reflect a re-focused remit, if agreed, and thoughts on whether an independent Chair was necessary.

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## **Nominet Update**

### *Changes to standard contracts*

The Policy Team updated the Committee on the recent changes to Nominet's standard contractual terms including the Registrant Terms and Conditions, the .UK Registrar Agreement and the launch of the Privacy Service Framework.

### *Update on DRS review process*

The Policy Team provided an update on the progress of the comment period on the review of the DRS. It was noted that responses had been received from a range of sectors including the Legal, IP, and DRS expert communities, DRS users, Nominet Registrars, and domain name registrants. Respondents had indicated broad support for the proposal to consolidate the policy and procedure into a single document but had expressed some concern over the additional wording proposed relating to initial interest confusion and the removal of the fees section from the Policy. Committee members were thanked for their support in raising awareness of the review amongst their networks.

### *Criminal Use Suspensions*

The criminal domain suspension infographic published in February was highlighted. The report, detailing the suspension activity following notifications from Law Enforcement Agencies had been positively received and featured in a number of media reports. In the following discussion one committee member commented that it would be interesting to investigate how many notifications are for new domains compared to those that have a longer life span and have been renewed. The Policy Team agreed to follow this up with colleagues.

### *Upcoming Policy Work*

The Policy Team gave a brief overview of a number of pieces of work that were coming up in the pipeline. These included a look at the rationale for allowing registrations by direct application to Nominet rather than via a Registrar, a broad review of charges made directly to domain name registrants, and a number of additional initiatives that the Committee were asked to treat as confidential at this stage. It was noted that all of these were in the early stages of thinking and were flagged to the Committee for information only. The Policy Team noted that details would be shared with stakeholders more widely in due course.

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## **AOB**

None