



Information Rights Team
Post Office Limited
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Our reference: APP201601280930

Mr Robert Whittaker
request-298764-eac954ea@whatdotheyknow.com

11 May 2016

Dear Mr Whittaker,

**Internal Review of request for Branch Finder Information -
APP201601280930**

I am writing in response to your request for an Internal Review of Post Office Limited's ("**Post Office**") handling of your request for Branch Finder Information dated 28 January and 14 March 2016.

Post Office has, in line with its procedures, conducted an Internal Review of the handling of your request and has found that in the circumstances it has been reasonable in its response times to your detailed correspondence. Post Office's decision in respect to the re-use of the Branch Finder Information remains unchanged.

1. Background

In your original request for recorded information under Ref: FOI201510231458 received by Post Office on 23 October 2015 you requested the following information:

In accordance with RoPSIR regulation 6, I would like to formally request permission to re-use the Post Office branch information (name, address, opening times, service details etc., but excluding the Google map) that is displayed in response to searches using your online "Branch Finder" tool at <http://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder>. The purposes for which the information will be re-used are: (a) to help improve the mapping of Post Office branches in OpenStreetMap, and (b) to make a consolidated dataset available to others in a reusable electronic form under an open licence. I would therefore like to request that you grant permission to re-use this information for these purposes under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3 (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>). Given my intended uses, any more restrictive licensing terms would be likely to "unnecessarily restrict" the way in which the information can be re-used, contrary to RoPSIR regulation 12.

You then sent a further email request on 28 January 2016 asking for a review of the request.

Post Office responded to you on 14 March 2016 to state that the information you requested was not available for re-use under the terms of an open licence but you were permitted to re-use the information under the terms of the Non-Commercial Government Licence and providing you included a statement that the information may not be entirely up-to-date and that the latest network information can be found on Post Office Branch Finder at <http://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder>.

The Non-Commercial Government Licence is a National Archives standard licence and part of the UK Government Licensing Framework. It is also one of the specified forms of licence under the Section 45 Code of Practice on Datasets under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It is therefore recognised as being an appropriate form of licence for licensing re-use of public sector information and Post Office therefore did not consider this form to unnecessarily restrict the way in which responses to a search under Branch Finder can be used.

We also explained why using this method is the most accurate way for customers to access up to date information, as information about our branches is constantly changing.

Immediately following receipt of the response you made a further request, dated 14 March 2016 for an internal as follows:

First, referring to your response of 14th March 2016, I must ask you to reconsider the licence under which you are allowing re-use of the information, pursuant to whether or not you are complying with RoPSI r12(2)(a).

You will note that in my request I specifically asked for permission to re-use the information under the terms of the Open Government Licence (OGL) v3 [1], since my intended re-uses were (a) to help improve the mapping of Post Office branches in OpenStreetMap, and (b) to make a consolidated dataset available to others in a reusable electronic form under an open licence. Use (a) requires a licence which is forwards compatible with the Open Database Licence (ODbL) [2], while use (b) requires a licence which is "Open" (e.g. according to the Open Definition [3]). The OGL would be sufficient for both of these uses.

The licence that you offered me was the Non-Commercial Government Licence [4]. Unfortunately this licence is neither forwards compatible with the ODbL nor Open (as it restricts usage to non-commercial endeavours). Therefore neither of my intended re-uses would be possible under this licence. Thus it is clear that your imposition of this licence restricts the way in which the information can be re-used.

To comply with RoPSI r12(2)(a), any such restrictions must be "necessary". In your response you have not made a case for this restriction to be "necessary" at all, and indeed I can see no reason why it would be. Surely it can only be in your interests to have information about the locations of your Post Office Branches as widely available as possible, so why you are deliberately trying to hamper the efforts of OpenStreetMap to better map your branches is beyond me.

Secondly, under RoPSIR r11(1)(b) could you please now make all the information available through your branch-finder also available in an open and machine-readable format. I would suggest that a CSV file containing all the displayed records from your Branch database would be most appropriate. However, if that is not practicable, then a raw database dump (as required by r11(1)(a)) would probably do instead. (I am aware that you already make some of the information available at <http://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/modernising-post-office> , but I believe that you are now required by RoPSI to make the rest similarly available.)

Post Office has carried out an internal review of your request for information and the way your request has been handled by the Information Rights Team, as set out below.

2. Timescale for response

We note your complaint; however we consider that we replied by such time as is reasonable in the circumstances. We provided you with updates on the delay on 20 November 2015, 18 December 2015, 25 February 2016 and 13 April 2016 in addition to acknowledgements to each of your communications.

Post Office is undergoing significant change which requires Post Office to consider the wider implications of intended improvements. Unfortunately, this affected the timescale of our response and we apologise for any delays in our responses.

3. Request for Re-Use of Branch Finder Information

In regards to your request to review our decision to re-use Branch Finder information (name, address, opening times, service details etc.) that is displayed in response to searches using our Branch Finder tool under an Open Government Licence, I have to advise that our decision that was communicated to you on 14 March 2016 remains unchanged and you are permitted to re-use this information under the terms of the Non-Commercial Government Licence because this recognised as being an appropriate form of licence for licensing the re-use of public sector information.

I trust that this now satisfies your request. In the event that you remain unhappy with the handling of this request, you also have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner who can be contacted at the address below:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



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