

No. 458/2019

Monday 29th July 2019

Royal Mail and the CWU: Final Mile Optimisation (FMO) Joint Launch Communication

Dear Colleagues,

On the 15th February 2019, the Outdoor Department issued a memo to Divisional Reps and ADRs containing a RM & CWU Joint Statement which outlined developments and proof of concept activity in relation to the system upgrades of the outdoor planning tools for Delivery and Collections and which have been given the overall title of Final Mile Optimisation (FMO).

Since then and following further verbal updates given by the Department at the recent ADR Briefings held on the 12th and 18th July 2019, the purpose of this LTB is to confirm the joint launch of the system upgrades under FMO of Route Manager and Georoute.

To provide some background, Branches and Reps will be aware that meetings have been taking place since late 2018 between Royal Mail and the CWU through the Delivery Systems Working Group and as part of the National Delivery design and section 19.3 of the National Guiding Principles (Four Pillars and Pay) Agreement on a number of developments and system upgrades linked to planning tools for Delivery and Collections.

The upgrades covered the two key systems of:

- Replacing A-plus with Route Manager
- Replacing the Georoute 2008 with Georoute 2017

Following further discussions and joint proof of concept activity, the attached Final Mile Optimisation (FMO) Joint Launch Communications has been agreed and is attached for the attention of Branches and Representatives.

Whilst the attached joint launch communication is fairly self-explanatory, it confirms the following key items:

What is Final Mile Optimisation

FMO is a necessary technical refresh of the outdoor route planning systems for Delivery and Collections which are over 10 years old and reaching end of life.

New software and technology means that the new systems can:

- Simplify and improve current processes
- Take advantage of new data products e.g. road speed, terrain, maps, NYB
- Reduce the maintenance task for local units
- Enhance the verification processes
- Complete revisions faster with a quicker start-up phase
- Build in manual interventions automatically
- Use latest agreed outdoor values
- Achieve greater accuracy with high confidence in outputs

This refresh forms part of Royal Mail's Digital Transformation Strategy. It will help to better maintain accurate routing data ensuring fair and balanced workload for all, plan and execute change faster by automating many of the tasks that previously relied on manual input or intervention and supports the development of new products and services to customers such as Consumer Collections and Inflight Redirections.

FMO will be deployed in 2 releases as follows:

Release 1 goes live on a staged basis from w/c 29th July 2019 and will include:

- Pegasus A-Plus and Road Network Maintenance applications replaced with a new Route Manager application for Delivery
- Georoute 2008 replaced with Georoute 2017 for Delivery
- Updated data products and automatic refresh cycle through trusted 3rd party sources

Release 2 will go live at a later date following completion of a design, build, and test phase:

- Adjusted should take time to reflect forecast traffic
- Seasonal route planning capability
- Georoute 2017 and Route Manager for Collections

Royal Mail and the CWU can now confirm that Release 1 is ready to go live from 29th July.

Planning for Release 2 will commence shortly with joint discussions taking place through the Delivery Systems Group continuing on the new capabilities associated with it. Both parties understand this development is likely to be deployed in late 2020 and as such, have agreed these discussions will also take place parallel to the New Delivery Agreement outlined in section 19.3 Guiding Principles Agreement.

Current Status

The current status of the programme means that GeoRoute will be upgraded for Deliveries and will use the latest outdoor values taken from the nationally agreed exercise for the observation studies that took place in 2017. The current A-Plus and Road Network Maintenance systems will be combined into a new system called Route Manager, and large amounts of data will be automated in the new systems. Delivery will transition from the Pegasus platform onto Route Manager. The move to current technology will also assist with integration with other platforms which are also subject to further discussions between Royal Mail & the CWU.

Next Steps/Notifications

A technical cutover of the A-plus system has now been completed. This means that units are unable to make changes to the underlying data until the new system goes live on a staged basis from w/c 29th July. To manage the initial load on system resources, a managed ramp up will be planned. Preceding go live further communications will be shared, advising units when they can access the new system.

A key aspect of the new system is the notifications function which advises Champions and Unit Managers of any changes in Route Manager either for information or review and action. Units should expect an initial peak of notifications in the immediate period after going live. Managers will need to review the level of items to action, agree a plan to clear these down and schedule sufficient time for their Champions to complete these and this needs to be considered at future weekly resource meetings. It is important to note that Route Manager changes will not impact on workload at route level in release 1; it is purely an administrative task.

Post Go Live Review

Both Royal Mail and the CWU are keen to understand how the new system supports both business as usual and revision activity in the future. Further National discussions regarding the delivery revision programme along with a joint agreed revised revision process to support revision are continuing and further joint communications will be issued in due course.

In issuing the attached Final Mile Optimisation (FMO) Joint Launch Communications and as set out above, Branches and Representatives are advised however that a Nationally agreed revised revision process to reflect and capture these system upgrades has not been reached yet and talks remain ongoing in this area, including the need to pilot the revised revision process to ensure it is fit for purpose against the upgrades made to Route Manager and Georoute.

Equally, the Outdoor Department has been clear to Royal Mail from the outset that any planned or currently ongoing revision activity within Delivery Offices must be planned to factor in the 1-hour SWW reduction due this year and in line with the National Guiding Principles (Four Pillars and Pay) Agreement.

This position reflects current developments concerning the National Point of Principle Disagreement and Honouring the Four Pillars and Pay Agreement (LTB 456/19 issued by the DGS(P) Department referred and is attached).

As such, Branches and Representatives are advised that in the case of Delivery Offices currently involved in revisions or where revision activity is planned that disagreement should be registered via the IR Framework where Royal Mail does not accept that the 1-hour SWW reduction is planned in as part of the revision outputs.

Further updates will be provided in due course.

Any enquiries to the content of the above please contact the Outdoor Department reference 230.03, email address: outdoorsecretary@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Baulch
CWU Assistant Secretary