POL00211460

From: Mark R Davies GRO

Sent: Fri 24/10/2014 10:01:49 AM (UTC)

To: Patrick Bourke GRO

Cc: Belinda Crowe GRO; Chris Aujard GRO; Melanie Corfield GRO; Tom Wechsler GRO; Jane Hill GRO

Subject: Re: Handling Arbuthnot (and related) correspondence

Agree with all that has been said.

My only point would be around a UQ. This would only be good if we were absolutely sure where the minister would end up. Part of the problem we have is the way in which SS were held up as key to process in the parly statement last year.

M

Sent from my iPhone

On 24 Oct 2014, at 09:50, "Patrick Bourke" GRO wrote:

> I forgot to add that the essence of the complaints about the scheme appears to be that we're failing to accept responsibility for something which, in the cases we've seen to date, simply did not happen. It's absurd.
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Patrick Bourke
> Sent: 24 October 2014 09:35
> To: Belinda Crowe; Mark R Davies; Chris Aujard; Melanie Corfield; Tom Wechsler; Jane Hill
> Subject: RE: Handling Arbuthnot (and related) correspondence
>
> Belinda
>
> Thanks.
>
> I think your approach must be right and, taking the easiest first, I wholeheartedly agree with 3, that there should be no suggestion of a Paula meeting with Ron - it just feels completely inappropriate and would, in any event, take us precisely nowhere. As a matter of interest, do Ian and Chris at SS know of Ron's actions ?
>
> On 2, I think this is pretty straightforward and AP should play a straight bat.
>
> On 1, I agree that a call would be preferable (and actually more do-able) to a meeting where we have no control over attendees. I also agree with Jane that we should avoid appeasing or giving the impression of appeasing JA. We have nothing to apologise for, we are trying hard to play the game fairly and have gone considerably further than any other large corporate might in similar circumstances (with the benefit of hindsight, far, far too far). He, on the other hand, is being less than reasonable - even in his absurd chasing of Paula and the rudeness of his office.
>
> As we discussed, I think it's important to step back a bit and think about what we want out of this situation - despite the unpleasantness of the immediate moment, this may provide us with an opportunity, if played right, to make some important changes in how we resolve this whole Horizon mess. I don't think it would be too difficult to dream up a replacement system that is thorough and fair, demonstrably reasonable (so as to guard against potential legal challenge), with an independent element and which costs considerably less (what wouldn't?).
>
> For whatever reason, and some considerable time ago, we rather let JFSA (and MPs with an entirely partial reading of the situation) have far too much purchase on our decisions. This should probably be the point at which we redress that imbalance.
>
> Best wishes
>
> Patrick
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Belinda Crowe

POL00211460

> Sent: 23 October 2014 20:11
> To: Mark R Davies; Chris Aujard; Melanie Corfield; Tom Wechsler; Patrick Bourke; Jane Hill
> Cc: Belinda Crowe
> Subject: Handling Arbuthnot (and related) correspondence
>
> Very rough thoughts.
>
> We have three matters to deal with:
> 1. Paula's response to JA's letter and emails 2. Alice's response to JA's email 3. Ron's request for a meeting with Paula
>
> Aim: To attempt to persuade JA to take a moderate approach to this but not to the extent that we give ground and take the opportunity to make some of our key points.
>
> On 1. I think the letter as drafted does the trick but, in view of Alice's comments whether Paula offers him a call in the first instance as since his letter his office has emailed twice, Ron has asked for a meeting which he claims to be doing at James' instigation and he has emailed Alice. A call will allow Paula to get some matters on the record without the possibility of turning up to a meeting with Second Sight and JFSA and some hostile MPs and know opportunity to have a frank discussion with JA. The call could be quite robust. We have lines.
>
> On 2. I suggest Alice simply responds to say she is sorry that he felt the need to email her in those terms knowing that PV is on holiday and stating a view to her without having heard what Paula has to say. She knows that Paula will pick this up on her return and she would hope he would give her an opportunity to do so before taking any action.
>
> On 3. I really don't think Paula should meet Ron. I think that I should go back to Ron and say that Paula has asked Chris to deal with this matter as he is the Senior responsible director. He will keep her appraised accordingly. Chris will remind Ron of the ToRs and his engagement letter and ask that he raises his concerns in the first instance at the Working Group and also informs the Working Group of his conversations with JA.
>
> Other matters. If this gets into the press our lines hold that we are not prepared to discuss the Scheme - its confidential.
>
> If there is a request for a UQ our response will be that any public debate on the issues potentially undermines individual investigations and mediations and it is not appropriate at this stage any more than it would be to debate cases going through the Courts.
>
> More generally we need to consider alerting Tony. Second Sight have not responded on Tony's request for dates to pick up the discussion on the cases we did not reach last week. If they decline to participate in the Working Group then we would need to consider that in light off the terms of their engagement. I plan to chase Ron about dates tonight.
>
> Grateful for views.
>
> I couldn't get hold of BIS but will try again tomorrow.
> Best wishes
> Belinda