

Message

From: Callard, Richard - UKGI [GRO]
Sent: 11/04/2017 14:45:00
To: [GRO]
CC: Russell, Mark - UKGI [GRO]
Subject: POL update for your meeting with Alex

Hi Robert

Mark asked me to email you to update you on where we are on Post Office, in light of your forthcoming conversation with Alex Chisholm:

- You will recall the difficulties we've been having on POL funding and the sensitivities around providing advice to the SoS
- Following on from our meeting, we learnt that the BEIS Commercial team had been asked by Alex to review UKGI's work. That was done very quickly, and they have not found anything particularly material upon which to comment, but the BEIS centre clearly felt there was a need to bring in their own people (either to gain their own re-assurance, or because they felt the SoS would not rely on UKGI's work alone)
- In conversation with an old colleague who now works in BEIS finance, he was quite clear that there was a lot of scepticism about UKGI's role generally within BEIS, particularly where they have the old DECC Commercial team on hand. The "model" of having people on the board, being close to our companies etc, is not fully understood across BEIS (although I think Alex gets it).
- My overriding remaining concern on POL is how we "land" such a complex and multi-faceted funding case. It would be difficult enough at the best of times, but given that the SoS has asked for advice that goes to HMT and him simultaneously (and he does not particularly want to receive any briefing alone as that negates his strategy to bind HMT in), it does make it very difficult to get our messages across and bring this to a conclusion. For business reasons (and those of getting state aid approval by 31st March 2018), the lack of agreement on funding starts to increase the level of risk that the business faces from around the end of May onwards.

Happy to discuss if required, telephone numbers below.

Kind regards

Richard

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