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To: Clarke, Stephen - UKGI[GRO] Adegun, Oluwatosin - UKGI[GRO] Parker, Nick - UKGI[GRO] Cooper, Tom - UKGI[GRO] Cole, Alex - UKGI[GRO]

Subject: Reflections on POL's portfolio review, 5 July 2018

Last week we had POL's quarterly 'Portfolio Review' meeting at UKGI (Alex – [here's](#) a quick guide to portfolio reviews). I thought it would be useful to share my reflections – I'd really welcome hearing what others thought too.

Overall, I found the whole exercise valuable. It was great to get perspective from beyond the team and I got a lot from preparing for it, as it forced me to get things straight in my own mind.

Main messages from the discussion included:

- Panel liked the material we'd prepared. They were less convinced by the 'traffic light' dashboard – which I am currently revisiting with Tosin
- Litigation was discussed. The prime risk identified here was the departure of Elizabeth. We were asked to ensure that her successor is on top of this – and the lessons from the NDA – as she is. Govt legal should be involved 'at every stage', including physically attending the trial. Getting BEIS legal engaged may be a challenge for us here.
- IT resilience was another issue that should 'keep us awake at night'. We were encouraged to get assurance from externals (which Tom C has actioned). They also questioned whether the head of IT should also be heading up 'change' too – should this job be split, and/or should he get more support in the short term?
- POL overstretch. More generally we discussed the large amount on POL's plate and its ability to manage it all, and to focus. One of UKGI's roles should be to identify gaps in capacity, or individual overstretch. In addition to discussing splitting the IT/change role, we also touched on splitting AI's current CFO and COO role
- UKGI role. The panel recognised the tension between providing constructive challenge and moving into being a 'shadow board'. We need to know enough to advise ministers, but we shouldn't be doing detailed work in-house. No hard and fast rules were (could be?) offered in operationalising this line – it is an ongoing challenge for us.
- Framework agreement. The panel also noted the chair's resistance to board effectiveness reviews and remuneration controls – I'm not sure any advice was offered beyond the importance of getting the framework agreement in place.

I expect the next review to be early October. In the meantime we may have also be invited to an 'Assurance and Risk Panel', which will doubtless cover some of the same ground. No date has yet been set.

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