

To: Gratton, Lorna - UKGI [redacted]; Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT)[Badenoch [redacted] **GRO**]
From: Annie LEIGH (DBT)
Sent: 2024-01-27T17:42:39Z
Importance: Normal
Subject: Re: Read out: [to action today] - Letter to Post Office Chair [offsen]
Received: 2024-01-27T17:42:50Z

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Hi Lorna

She didn't explicitly go into the points about whistleblowing. She only mentioned serious concerns, complaints and governance issues. Henry did allude to being aware and implied he would go to extreme (legal) lengths to refute any allegations if they were made in the media. She did also say we would follow up with the formal letter setting out more detail.

Annie

Annie Leigh | Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State

Tel: [redacted] **GRO**

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

From: Gratton, Lorna - UKGI <[redacted] **GRO**>
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2024 5:30 pm
To: Annie LEIGH (DBT) <[redacted] **GRO**>; Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <Badenoch [redacted] **GRO**>
Subject: Re: Read out: [to action today] - Letter to Post Office Chair [offsen]

Thanks Annie, very helpful to see.

A quick question on your read out for my info- did the sos go into the ground for his dismissal (ie trying to shut down the whistleblowing investigation and his behaviours)? Or did she just say governance issues?

Thanks,
Lorna

Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Annie LEIGH (DBT) <[redacted] **GRO**>
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2024 4:55 pm
To: Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <Badenoch [redacted] **GRO**>; Perm SEC (DBT) <perm.sec [redacted] **GRO**>; Gratton, Lorna - UKGI <[redacted] **GRO**>; Carl CRESWELL (DBT) <[redacted] **GRO**>; Samuel HERRERA (DBT) <[redacted] **GRO**>; Catriona MACMAHON (DBT) <[redacted] **GRO**>
Cc: Minister HOLLINRAKE (DBT) <[redacted] **GRO**>; Ryan HANLEY (DBT) <[redacted] **GRO**>; Dylan SHARPE (DBT) <[redacted] **GRO**>; Coppin, James - UKGI <[redacted] **GRO**>

Subject: Read out: [to action today] - Letter to Post Office Chair [offsen]

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

Dear all,

The call took place at 15:45 – sharing a brief read out of what was discussed. Please treat sensitively.

Thank you ever so much for your support over the weekend to prepare SoS. Carl, Megan, and I briefly chatted about the choreography of sending out the formal letters and that is in hand for later today.

Annie

Readout: Call between SoS and Sir Henry Staunton (27/01/24)

Attendees: SoS, Sir Henry Staunton, Annie Leigh (listening PS)

- SoS informed Sir Henry Staunton (HS) that the government, as sole shareholder, was exercising its power, under the company's Articles to remove him as Chair of the Post Office Board.
- SoS apologised that the call was coming at short notice due to desire to speak ahead of the media breaking the story. SoS committed to sending HS a more formal record of the decision in slower time.
- HS noted that he was called by a reporter this morning to comment on the story. He reflected his dismay under the circumstances.
- HS described some of the events over the last four weeks, reflecting that the Post Office as an organisation is operating in an extremely challenging context.
- SoS asked HS what next steps he would recommend the government take. HS recommended the following key actions:
 - Commence a discussion with the CEO asking them to stay through the inquiry and in return exploring the possibility of good leaver status.
 - Extensive work to ensure that the culture at the Post Office is overhauled. HS noted he strongly disagrees with disparaging views of postmasters and called for a more postmaster-centric approach. In particular, HS suggested an oversight committee chaired by two Postmaster Directors, and explore appointing a third in the future.
 - Greater support from UKGI, a view that HS said was shared by other board members; and
 - An internal person appointed as SID, recommending Andrew Darfoor as a candidate.
- SoS noted that she had received a briefing on the governance issues at the Post Office and that the complaints against HS are so serious that the government need to intervene.
- SoS and HS discussed the comms for his departure and agreed to work together on a simple form of words (AL note - we have shared something with HS for comment as we speak).
- SoS and HS agreed he would not attend the board meeting on Monday or Tuesday.
- SoS concluded the call by thanking HS for his service; expressing her displeasure that the media had broken the story ahead of a lengthier conversation; and noting HS' recommendations for the Post Office going forward.

-Ends-

Annie Leigh | Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State

Tel: GRO

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE

From: Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <BadenochGRO>

Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2024 1:51 PM

To: Perm SEC (DBT) <GRO>; Gratton, Lorna - UKGI <GRO>; Carl

CRESWELL (DBT) <[GRO]>; Samuel HERRERA (DBT)
<[GRO]>; Catriona MACMAHON (DBT)
<[GRO]>; Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT)
<[GRO]>
Cc: Minister HOLLINRAKE (DBT) <[GRO]>; Annie LEIGH (DBT)
<[GRO]>; Ryan HANLEY (DBT) <[GRO]>; Dylan
SHARPE (DBT) <[GRO]>; Coppin, James - UKGI <[GRO]>
Subject: RE: [to action today] - Letter to Post Office Chair

Just to confirm to the chain- Mark K now will not run the story until after SoS' call, and will run it straight after.

This means I have not issued the letter and we revert to plan 1 which is SoS phone call. Will provide a readout afterwards so Lorna/Carl you can take forward next steps.

Best wishes,

Megan

Megan Scott (*she/her*) | Senior Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for
Business and Trade |
Department for Business and Trade | Old Admiralty Building, London, SW1A 2DY
Tel: [GRO] | E-mail: [GRO]
gov.uk/dbt | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | great.gov.uk

From: Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <Badenoch[GRO]>
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2024 1:18 PM
To: Perm SEC (DBT) <[GRO]>; Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT)
<Badenoch[GRO]>; Gratton, Lorna - UKGI <[GRO]>; Carl CRESWELL (DBT)
<[GRO]>; Samuel HERRERA (DBT) <[GRO]>;
Catriona MACMAHON (DBT) <[GRO]>
Cc: Minister HOLLINRAKE (DBT) <[GRO]>; Annie LEIGH (DBT)
<[GRO]>; Ryan HANLEY (DBT) <[GRO]>; Dylan
SHARPE (DBT) <[GRO]>; Coppin, James - UKGI <[GRO]>
Subject: RE: [to action today] - Letter to Post Office Chair

Just to confirm- we expect Mark K to run story imminently.

SoS has confirmed she would like me to issue the letter to him ahead of this.

I will confirm when I have issued.

Best wishes,

Megan

From: Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <Badenoch[GRO]>
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2024 12:14 PM
To: Perm SEC (DBT) <[GRO]>; Gratton, Lorna - UKGI <[GRO]>; Carl

CRESWELL (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Samuel HERRERA (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Catriona MACMAHON (DBT) <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Minister HOLLINRAKE (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Annie LEIGH (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Ryan HANLEY (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Dylan SHARPE (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Coppin, James - UKGI <[REDACTED]>; Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <[REDACTED]>
Subject: RE: [to action today] - Letter to Post Office Chair

Thanks so much, Lorna, Really appreciate you sending over the below, especially on a Saturday!

I understand Carl will issue 1a one the phone call has happened.

Will update you as soon as the call has happened and will provide a readout/summary of the call.

Best wishes,

Megan

Megan Scott (*she/her*) | Senior Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade |
Department for Business and Trade | Old Admiralty Building, London, SW1A 2DY
Tel: [REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]
gov.uk/dbt | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | great.gov.uk

From: Perm SEC (DBT) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2024 11:58 AM
To: Gratton, Lorna - UKGI <[REDACTED]>; Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Carl CRESWELL (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Samuel HERRERA (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Catriona MACMAHON (DBT) <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Minister HOLLINRAKE (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Annie LEIGH (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Ryan HANLEY (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Dylan SHARPE (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Coppin, James - UKGI <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: [to action today] - Letter to Post Office Chair

Hi Lorna,

Thanks for looping us in. The Perm Sec is travelling back from Paris this afternoon so he won't be able to make these calls. He's content for you to call the SID and CEO but has asked to see a readout after.

Best,
Jasmine

Jasmine Bossley
Private Secretary to the Permanent Secretary
Department for Business and Trade

[REDACTED]

From: Gratton, Lorna - UKGI <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2024 11:29 am
To: Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <[REDACTED]>; Carl CRESWELL (DBT)

<[REDACTED] GRO >; Samuel HERRERA (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >;
Catriona MACMAHON (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Perm SEC (DBT)
<[REDACTED] GRO >
Cc: Minister HOLLINRAKE (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Annie LEIGH (DBT)
<[REDACTED] GRO >; Ryan HANLEY (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Dylan
SHARPE (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Perm SEC (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >;
Coppin, James - UKGI <[REDACTED] GRO >
Subject: RE: [to action today] - Letter to Post Office Chair

Hi Megan,

Please find attached three letters.

- 1a. A version of the termination letter to issue following a phone call between Henry and the SoS
- 1b. A version of the termination letter to issue in case the SoS doesn't manage to speak to him.
- 2. A letter to the company secretary at POL informing the company.

1a has been agreed with lawyers previously. 1b adds a little bit more context, and says an official will be in touch in due course to explain the decision.

REDACTION

REDACTION

The address for the letter notifying the company is Rachel Scarrabelotti <[REDACTED] GRO >
CompanySecretarial <[REDACTED] GRO > This second letter could be sent by officials if you prefer,
in which case Carl is happy to send.

I'd be very grateful if you could let me know when the call has happened, as I will then call the Senior Independent Director, and CEO to let them know (unless @Perm SEC (DBT) Gareth would like to?).

Thanks,
Lorna

Lorna Gratton | Director

UK Government Investments

1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET

T <[REDACTED] GRO >
<[REDACTED] GRO >

www.ukgi.org.uk

PA: <[REDACTED] GRO >

From: Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <Badenoch <[REDACTED] GRO >>
Sent: 27 January 2024 10:45
To: Carl CRESWELL (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Gratton, Lorna - UKGI
<[REDACTED] GRO >; Samuel HERRERA (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Catriona
MACMAHON (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >
Cc: Secretary Of State INTERNATIONAL TRADE (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Minister HOLLINRAKE
(DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Annie LEIGH (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Ryan
HANLEY (DBT) <[REDACTED] GRO >; Dylan SHARPE (DBT)
<[REDACTED] GRO >
Subject: [to action today] - Letter to Post Office Chair

Morning Carl and Lorna,

I'm so sorry to interrupt your weekend with an additional ask on the Post Office Chair.

SoS is hoping to call Henry today and I have emailed him to ask to set up a time. If he does not reply, SoS will try to call his personal phone number to speak over the phone.

If this does not happen, SoS will inform him of the decision via a letter, to be issued at about 4pm today.

@Carl CRESWELL (DBT)_@Gratton, Lorna - UKGI please could you draft us a letter for SoS to issue in case of the above, and share with me by midday so I can clear it through SpAds and SoS this afternoon? Given the script has been cleared by yourselves and legal, hopefully this isn't too onerous of an ask and you can use that as the basis for the letter.

On media handling, we understand the Mail and Mark Kleinman may already have the story but this is not 100% confirmed- @Samuel HERRERA (DBT) is working on updating our comms defensive lines, and @Catriona MACMAHON (DBT) will helpfully input lines into SoS' briefing pack for tomorrow morning's media interview which was already going ahead with Laura K.

Best wishes,

Megan

Megan Scott (*she/her*) | Senior Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for
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