

From: Rebecca STOCKBRIDGE (DBT)/[O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=E4205499829843B8B4BB8A5921AA38AA-8631DC4B-2B]
Sent: Fri 16/02/2024 11:03:19 AM (UTC)
To: Brooks-White Jobshare [GRO]; Ed BAIRD (DBT) [GRO]
Subject: FW: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

To see – HS and SM did meet. Little evidence of substantive discussion around compensation; the issues of the day seemed to be POL's financial position and leadership (including pay).

R

From: Permanent Secretaries [GRO]
Sent: Friday, January 6, 2023 2:29 PM
To: Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) [GRO]; Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI [GRO]; Cooper, Tom - UKGI [GRO]; Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS) [GRO]; Creswell, Carl (Business Sectors - Services Directorate) [GRO]; Brooks-White (Jobshare) [GRO]; Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI [GRO]; Gourlay, James - UKGI [GRO]; Brightwell, Rob (Business Sectors - Services Directorate) [GRO]; Daffu, Bal - UKGI [GRO]; Putt, Lily - UKGI [GRO]; Barnett, David - UKGI [GRO]; Scott, Joshua - UKGI [GRO]
Cc: Permanent Secretaries [GRO]
Subject: RE: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Hi Siv, all,

Sarah met with Henry yesterday – thanks very much for the support on briefing. It was a fairly frank/open convo in general, I should flag that Sarah opted not to write to Henry prior to the meeting. Readout below, left longer as I think useful:

Thanks,
Nicol

Henry Staunton (HS) intro with Sarah Munby (SM)

Henry noted he has never seen a corporation challenged on so many fronts (eg the network, parcel biz etc), don't have luxury of prioritisation as every issue is a big one.

SM agreed that challenge is significant and that politics around POL make this an even trickier problem to solve, the timing of agreeing a longer term solution this year is also very difficult politically. Noted that we do need to be ready for what that answer is though.

SM flagged that the relationship on funding w/HMT is difficult, their view will always lean towards the 'begging bowl' type scenario, a dynamic worsened by horizon/inquiry costs.

HS/SM agreed to having frank/open relationship on POL

SM gave background to SoS ways of working - noting fairly hard/pushy with ALBs/Partner Orgs.

SM/HS discussed NR pay.

- SM
 - o sympathetic to case for NR and have been working hard to push this forward.
 - o SoS is very hard-line on executive pay and haven't so far been successful in getting progress but have postponed formal decision till post-Henry/SoS chat.
 - o SoS understands risks of NR leaving
 - o balancing act in terms of HS raising at mtg - given its first discussion w/SoS so potential for getting off on wrong foot combined w/relative low chance of success
- HS
 - o Can understand from SoS perspective why its difficult to approve and have already flagged this to NR
 - o Reflected that if perm sec cant get progress its unlikely he will get much further and questioned his worth in raising it
- SM if there is a good point in convo to land the issue/argument, could still consider raising it but he isnt going to agree to full request, still worth trying to get what we can
- HS keen to be straightforward w/NR

Succession/Mgmt

- SM SoS knows problems with internal succession and that mgmt team isnt as strong as could be so will likely raise this as challenge to fix
- HS noted also risks of bringing in new appts/firing people given precarious situ. But agree need to strengthen as does NR.
- HS/NR discussing in coming weeks w/HR director plans to strengthen where they can
- HS flagged issues of bringing on a successor in terms of having to pay them more £ from outset
- SM acknowledged combo of relatively restrained pay plus challenging role
- HS non exec strength also isnt good, often better people don't stick around

SM ran through what we are doing our side to think about policy options and £. Noted 3 difficulties on £:

1. We don't have it (will need to come from elsewhere)
2. In order to give any money it will need to be approved by HMT - who wont allow us to give until we have long term plan, but the timing doesn't work - so trying to do something to bridge
3. Subsidy control - without an excuse we cant just lift cash over the wall - have to be subsidy compliant (but should be fixable and is our problem to fix)

SM We might end up doing something small to buy space to collectively to get to the longer term.

SM/HS discussed political dynamics of policy options - eg difficulties in reducing networks.

HS mentioned targets ref in inquiry hearing - wasn't looking for apology but wider point around being synced up and acknowledging where each others roles lie. Was keen him and Sarah strategically aligned where poss

SM also keen to be aligned as far as poss, though reflected that level of trust in POL board/mgmt isnt that high and that funding will come with conditions/scrutiny (how hmt work) but agree with everyone playing in correct lane

HS queried NR bonus

SM noted in same place as pay

SM/HS agreed bad if have to repay and not worth it for the amount

HS thought shouldn't have got to SM in first instance

From: Permanent Secretaries; [GRO]
Sent: 30 December 2022 17:13
To: Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) [GRO]; Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI
[GRO]; Cooper, Tom - UKGI [GRO]; Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS)
[GRO]; Creswell, Carl (Business Sectors - Services Directorate)
[GRO]; Brooks-White (Jobshare) [GRO]; Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI
[GRO]; Gourlay, James - UKGI [GRO]; Brightwell, Rob
(Business Sectors - Services Directorate) [GRO]; Daffu, Bal - UKGI [GRO]
Putt, Lily - UKGI [GRO]; Parsons, Joe (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability)
[GRO]; Barnett, David - UKGI [GRO]; Scott, Joshua - UKGI
Cc: Skilbeck, Jessica (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) [GRO]; Permanent Secretaries
[GRO]
Subject: RE: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Hi Siv, all,

Thanks for the work on this. I boxed the letter before Christmas – will let you know Sarah's thoughts when I have them. On attendees we are planning to keep this to just Sarah/Henry given nature of some of the discussion.

Thanks,
Nicol

Nicol Brydon | Private Secretary to the Permanent Secretaries | [GRO]

From: Permanent Secretaries; [GRO]
Sent: 23 December 2022 17:33
To: Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) [GRO]; Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI
[GRO]; Cooper, Tom - UKGI [GRO]; Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS)
[GRO]; Creswell, Carl (Business Sectors - Services Directorate)
[GRO]; Brooks-White (Jobshare) [GRO]; Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI
[GRO]; Gourlay, James - UKGI [GRO]; Brightwell, Rob
(Business Sectors - Services Directorate) [GRO]; Daffu, Bal - UKGI [GRO]
Putt, Lily - UKGI [GRO]; Parsons, Joe (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability)
[GRO]; Barnett, David - UKGI [GRO]; Scott, Joshua - UKGI
[GRO]; Permanent Secretaries [GRO]
Cc: Skilbeck, Jessica (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) [GRO]
Subject: RE: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Hi Siv

Thank you for sending over the briefing for Sarah. To note- the meeting has moved to Thursday 5 Jan. I've updated the briefing accordingly.

In terms of attendees, I'm unsure as am covering for Nicol while he is on leave. Nicol is back on the 30th- I will ask him to confirm then.

@Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) Many thanks for the additional comments David. I've added them to

the briefing.

Hope you all have a great Christmas!

Thanks

Will

From: Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) [GRO]
Sent: 23 December 2022 12:54
To: Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI [GRO]; Permanent Secretaries
 [GRO] Cooper, Tom - UKGI [GRO] Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS)
 [GRO] Creswell, Carl (Business Sectors - Services Directorate)
 [GRO] Brooks-White (Jobshare) [GRO] Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI
 [GRO] Gourlay, James - UKGI [GRO] Brightwell, Rob
 (Business Sectors - Services Directorate) [GRO] Daffu, Bal - UKGI [GRO]
 Putt, Lily - UKGI [GRO]; Parsons, Joe (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability)
 [GRO] Barnett, David - UKGI [GRO] Scott, Joshua - UKGI
Cc: Skilbeck, Jessica (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) [GRO]
Subject: RE: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

There are a couple of further things I think Sarah needs to be aware of (and probably address):

- POL Review – SoS has said no to a review. He is content however for there to be an internal (to HMG, not just BEIS) review of policies. HMT's requirement in SR allocation was that there should be a review. From conversations with HMT officials, an internal only review is likely to be sufficient but their line is that, without a review giving a clear plan, more funding is not available. So, for POL Chair, we need to agree to work together on the review and further funding will be a real challenge until we have real progress on this.
- Inquiry fracas over HSS – at the statutory inquiry compensation hearing, BEIS counsel rather unfortunately contrasted BEIS's ambition (though he used the word target) of 100% HSS offers made by 31 December with POL's target of 95% and expressed the department's disappointment that the 100% "target" had not been hit. This created an eruption from POL, right up to Nick Read, on the grounds that 100% was never an agreed target and POL had achieved the agreed 95% target. We have apologised to POL leadership and the inquiry, but have reiterated our (and POL's) ambition for all postmasters to receive offers asap. I suspect we have not heard (and may never hear) the end of this. The line to take is that Counsel used the word target when he should have said ambition (and had generally created an unfair impression), we have apologised, reiterating the shared ambition to compensate swiftly and need to move on. (If Sarah feels like being a bit more punchy and isn't feeling as charitable as the season dictates, she might observe that if the application to extracting an apology is shown across the compensation board, POL will crack through the cases speedily).

Merry Christmas everyone!

Kind regards

David Bickerton



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

David Bickerton (he/him)

Director General, Business Sectors Group

Telephone: [GRO]

Email: [GRO]

1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET

www.gov.uk/beis | Twitter: [@beisgovuk](https://twitter.com/beisgovuk)

For diary queries and availability please contact my PA: [GRO]

From: Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI [GRO]
Sent: 23 December 2022 11:22
To: Permanent Secretaries [GRO] Cooper, Tom - UKGI [GRO]
 Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS) [GRO] Creswell, Carl (Business Sectors - Services Directorate) [GRO] Brooks-White (Jobshare) [GRO] Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) [GRO] Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI [GRO] Gourlay, James - UKGI [GRO] Brightwell, Rob (Business Sectors - Services Directorate) [GRO] Daffu, Bal - UKGI [GRO] Putt, Lily - UKGI [GRO] Parsons, Joe (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) [GRO] Barnett, David - UKGI [GRO] Scott, Joshua - UKGI [GRO]
Cc: Skilbeck, Jessica (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) [GRO]
Subject: RE: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Hi Nicol,

With thanks to BEIS and UKGI Colleagues for their inputs, please find attached the briefing note for Perm Sec's Meeting with the POL Chair on January 3.

Could you please confirm if you would like officials from UKGI and BEIS to attend, or if it will be just a one-to-one meeting. If the former, we will ensure a suitable UKGI and BEIS Official will be present.

Please let me know if any questions on the attached. Thanks again for all your help.

Best,

Siv

Siv Rajeswaran | Manager

UK Government Investments

1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET

M: [GRO]

www.ukgi.org.uk

Follow on 

From: Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI
Sent: 20 December 2022 16:54
To: Permanent Secretaries [GRO] Cooper, Tom - UKGI [GRO]
 Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS) [GRO] Creswell, Carl (Professional Business Services, Retail & Post Directorate) [GRO] brooks-white [GRO] Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) [GRO] Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI [GRO] Gourlay, James - UKGI [GRO] Rob Brightwell [GRO] Daffu, Bal - UKGI [GRO] Putt, Lily - UKGI [GRO] Parsons, Joe (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) [GRO] Barnett, David - UKGI [GRO]
Cc: Skilbeck, Jessica (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) [GRO]
Subject: RE: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

OS COMMERCIAL

Hi Nicol,

Thanks for the following steers.

To set the backdrop for Agenda Item 4, we have prepared the attached letter for Permanent Secretary to send through to Henry asap in advance of the meeting noting Perm Sec's receipt of the previous Chair's letter on Historical Matters and flagging immediate next steps, which includes discussion at the January 3 meeting.

Please let me know if any questions on the attached. We are separately preparing the broader briefing note for the meeting which we are on track to get to you by Friday morning.

Thanks again for all your help.

Best,

Siv

Siv Rajeswaran | Manager

UK Government Investments

1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET

M. **GRO**

www.ukgi.org.uk

Follow on 

From: Permanent Secretaries **GRO**
Sent: 19 December 2022 13:51
To: Cooper, Tom - UKGI **GRO**; Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS)
GRO Creswell, Carl (Professional Business Services, Retail & Post Directorate)
GRO **brooks-white** **GRO** Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office)
GRO; Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI **GRO** Gourlay, James -
UKGI **GRO** Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI **GRO** Rob Brightwell
GRO Daffu, Bal - UKGI **GRO** Putt, Lily - UKGI **GRO**
Parsons, Joe (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) **GRO** Barnett, David - UKGI
GRO
Cc: Skilbeck, Jessica (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) **GRO**; Permanent Secretaries
GRO
Subject: RE: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Hi Tom

I think so on split - though a lot of crossover between teams on each item. Only question is no.4 – I think Siv/James have tended to support our correspondence w/Pol so might be best placed? Think it's a fairly minor point but relates to previous convo on how we respond to Tim P's original historical matters letter, which has been separately discussed w/Rebecca & James. It may just need a line on where we are in responding to this and plans for addressing issues raised – as opposed to anything too detailed.

Don't mind who holds the overall lead on the briefing doc – but given split suggest it's still UKGI? Though if BEIS policy team have more capacity to lead then that's fine with me!

Thanks,
Nicol

Nicol Brydon | Private Secretary to the Permanent Secretaries | GRO

From: Cooper, Tom - UKGI GRO

Sent: 19 December 2022 13:04

To: Permanent Secretaries GRO; Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS)

GRO; Creswell, Carl (Business Sectors - Services Directorate)

GRO; Brooks-White (Jobshare) GRO; Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) GRO; Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI

GRO; Gourlay, James - UKGI GRO; Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI

GRO; Brightwell, Rob (Business Sectors - Services Directorate)

GRO; Daffu, Bal - UKGI GRO; Putt, Lily - UKGI GRO

Parsons, Joe (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) GRO; Barnett, David - UKGI

GRO

Cc: Skilbeck, Jessica (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) GRO

Subject: RE: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Thanks Nicol

A number of key members of the UKGI team are out this week.

I've asked Bal to discuss the letter on Funding received on Friday with the BEIS team and BEIS Finance. A sub will need to be prepared of the back of that and will cover points 2 and 3.

We can also cover 1. The agenda should also include an update from Henry on NED appointments. We will cover that too.

The other agenda points are for the BEIS team to draft aren't they?

Tom

From: Permanent Secretaries GRO

Sent: 19 December 2022 10:58

To: Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS) GRO; Creswell, Carl (Professional Business Services, Retail & Post Directorate) GRO brooks-white GRO; Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) GRO; Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI GRO

Gourlay, James - UKGI GRO; Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI GRO; Cooper, Tom - UKGI GRO; Rob Brightwell GRO; Parsons, Joe (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) GRO

Cc: Permanent Secretaries GRO; Skilbeck, Jessica (NZBI - Portfolio & Affordability) GRO

Subject: [Briefing Request - midday Friday 23/12] RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Hi all,

Sarah's meeting with Henry S has gone in for 3 Jan. Apologies this makes things rather tight for briefing as it's the first work day post-new year. Is it possible to receive **briefing by midday Friday**? My starter for 10 on what likely needs covered is below - but will defer to colleagues on the chain (Nb: not suggesting Sarah proactively raises everything

below, though am keen she is well placed to cover if needed):

1. CEO Pay (Sarah is close to this so doesn't need to be extensive)
2. POL short term finances
3. POL 3 yr plan
4. Recent exchange of letters (anything needing covered/acknowledged?)
5. Any other live issues (eg relating to Inquiry/Compensation)
6. NI EBSS – line on latest around POLs involvement

Grateful if UKGI can hold the pen, with relevant input from BEIS policy teams.

Many thanks,
Nicol

Nicol Brydon | Private Secretary to the Permanent Secretaries | GRO

From: Permanent Secretaries GRO
Sent: 16 December 2022 11:57
To: Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS) GRO; Creswell, Carl (Business Sectors - Services Directorate) GRO; Brooks-White (Jobshare) GRO; Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) GRO; Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI GRO; Gourlay, James - UKGI GRO; Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI GRO; Cooper, Tom - UKGI GRO
Cc: Permanent Secretaries GRO
Subject: RE: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Apologies – now with the correct Tom in copy...

Nicol

From: Permanent Secretaries GRO
Sent: 16 December 2022 11:35
To: Stockbridge, Rebecca (BEIS) GRO; Creswell, Carl (Business Sectors - Services Directorate) GRO; Brooks-White (Jobshare) GRO; Bickerton, David (Business Sectors DG Office) GRO; Taylor, Tom (Corporate Services - Finance) GRO; Arasaratnam, Roshana - UKGI GRO; Gourlay, James - UKGI GRO; Rajeswaran, Siv - UKGI GRO
Cc: Permanent Secretaries GRO
Subject: FW: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Hi all – tba response from Henry following the intro letter.

Best,
Nicol

Nicol Brydon | Private Secretary to the Permanent Secretaries | GRO

From: Diane Blanchard GRO
Sent: 15 December 2022 17:37

To: Permanent Secretaries: [GRO]
Cc: Henry Staunton (1) [GRO]
Subject: Attached Letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Dear Permanent Under-Secretary of State

Please see attached letter from Henry Staunton, Chairman

Kind regards
Diane

Diane Blanchard (She/Her)
Executive Assistant to Post Office Chairman,
Post Office Non-Executive Directors &
Ben Foat, Group General Counsel

[GRO]

postoffice.co.uk



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