POL00458454

From: Laurence ONeill GRO
Sent: Thur 09/05/2024 3:36:54 PM (UTC)
To: Sarah I Gray GRO; Karen McEwan GRO
Subject: FW: Project Pineapple, highly confidential
Attachment: Re: Project Pineapple - STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
Attachment: Re: Key Agenda Items for Upcoming Board Meeting

Hi Sarah

Further to our conversation earlier, the below email was the last email I had on Project Pineapple 2. I note you were not copied.

Following that email, there was a meeting (Ben F, Nic M and I were present. I think GRO may also have been present) with Amanda Burton, who confirmed that she (as Speak Up champion) and the Board were aware and were dealing with this matter. It was understood that no separate investigation into it was needed.

If you would like me to pick this up again with Amanda (perhaps for an update as to where the Board got to), please let me know.

Kind regards

Laurence O'Neill
Head of Legal, HR/IR

Legal, Compliance and Governance

GRO

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POST OFFICE

From: Ben Foat GRO
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 6:06 PM
To: Amanda Burton GRO
Cc: Laurence ONeill GRO; GRO
Subject: FW: Project Pineapple

Hi Amanda

POL00458454

A potential Speak Up matter has been brought to my attention late last week. On Friday, Nic Marriott contacted me and reported that in the course of her interview with Saf and Elliott in relation to Pineapple that Elliott Jacobs and Saf Ismail alleged that Nick Read lied to the BEIS Select Committee. They have alleged that Nick Read had used the word untouchables and that his comments in Parliament were untrue. They have followed up the assertion by sending the email of 18/1 to Nick where they refer to him having used the word untouchable to describe myself, Martin Roberts, JB. They also note that their emails were not provided to the Select Committee.

My understanding (though subject to the transcript) is that Nick Read has stated that he is not familiar with the word "untouchables" or as it pertains to the 40+ investigators that had been raised as still being in the POL business. Consequently, it may be Nick's position that he has not lied to Parliament.

The emails of Saf and Elliott (attached) were identified as part of the urgent review by the FOIA team but given that the search resulted a substantial number of returns it was further limited to Nick's sent box given that the request pertained to whether he had used the words – not someone else writing to him alleging that he used a derivative of a word in respect of another group of people. As Nick responded to Saf's email that email was identified to the group working on the disclosure to the SC but given that it does not record Nick using the term it was deemed not to fall within the scope of the request and therefore was not provided. As noted below, I was conflicted on the matter and therefore was not aware of those emails or involved in that aspect.

Ordinarily I would also write to Ben T (who I think does need to be informed) but Elliott and Saf have raised a concern regarding Ben T's involvement; in that (I understand from Nic M) they say that they raised this matter with Ben T and indeed the word had been used in a discussion in which he was present. They report that Ben T's view is that the matter has been dealt with at the Select Committee and that nothing further is to be done (which does not reflect their view).

Given that the two PM NEDs have made this potential Speak Up I believe I must raise with you. As Im conflicted, I have copied in Laurence who is aware of the issue and GRO (who is also aware of the correspondence search). JB is conflicted in these emails too. Karen has obviously been made aware.

My view is that Pinsents should support you on what steps should be taken in terms of investigating this matters.

As noted above, I did flag the fact that I consider myself to be conflicted (having immediately declared the conflict on Pineapple when the relevant email was sent to me). When I raised the conflict point again with Nic M she advised me that Elliott and Saf have retracted their position about me saying it was Henry's view and not theirs. That said, I still remain of the view that I am conflicted until the investigation is resolved. To be clear, I am merely passing on the information that I have received from Nic Marriott and of course she can liaise with you directly in due course.

Happy to have a call later this week if I or Nic M can be of assistance.

Kind regards
Ben

POL00458454

Ben Foat (He/Him)
Group General Counsel
100 Wood Street
London
EC2V 7ER

Email: GRO

Personal Assistant: GRO
Email: GRO

From: Nicola Marriott GRO
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 8:55 AM
To: Ben Foat GRO
Subject: Fw: Project Pineapple

FYI

From: Saf ismail GRO
Sent: 02 March 2024 08:49
To: Nicola Marriott GRO
Cc: Elliot Jacobs GRO
Subject: Project Pineapple

Hi Nicola

I hope all is well, see attached the emails that were not disclosed to the SC.

Let me know if you need anything else.

Regards

Saf Ismail
Non-Executive Director

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