

**To:** 'Bickerton, David (BEIS)' [REDACTED] GRO, 'Creswell, Carl (Professional Business Services, Retail & Post Directorate)' [REDACTED] GRO  
**From:** Gratton, Lorna - UKGI  
**Sent:** 2023-07-05T18:29:39Z  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** POL whistleblowing claim - [pls protect]  
**Received:** 2023-07-05T18:25:00Z

David, Carl,

I'm writing to make you aware of a short notice POL board meeting that was held this morning, following an extensive complaint made under the whistleblowing process.

The complaint is fairly wide ranging, though primarily related to the New Branch IT programme (NBIT). It alleges incompetent manage of the programme, poor governance, and misleading information being given to the board. In addition it makes a wide range of conduct and behaviour allegations against number of senior members of staff, some which are likely to be more subjective and/or serious than others.

At the board meeting Nick outlined a number of changes that he is proposing to make to the NBIT programme:

- KPMG and Accenture to come into do a review and assessment of the programme, with recommendations for actions – expected to take 6-12 weeks
- The hiring of a new transformation director (who I have met) to oversee the whole programme, and a stepping back of current management of the programme (to note there will likely be HR repercussions of this)
- The introduction of a new board committee to oversee NBIT (which is a request we made of the company)
- A pause (reduction to minimal progress/no regrets activity) on the programme whilst this is underway.

To note there are a number of other similar whistleblowing allegation relating to the programme. I think the changes Nick is proposing to make are sensible (and long overdue). Of particular note for us is the significant slow down of spend on NBIT, which is helpful in the context of the funding request. These changes have not been communication more widely to the business yet, and they have HR implication I'd be grateful if you didn't share them more widely for the moment.

With regard to the conduct claims that have been made - the company is proposing to do an investigation into them. The terms of reference for the conduct investigation will be shared with the board shortly. I think the range of the claims is sufficiently broad as to call into question the culture of the company and therefore be of interest to the shareholder. You should also be aware that there is an ongoing investigation into a claim of detriment by an existing whistle-blower (being supported by an external expert). I will keep you updated.

Finally, I wanted to note that I have concerns about the Chair's reaction to the claims and his initial approach to handling them. Whilst I think the board has ended up taking a sensible approach, this was not the Chair's preferred option. It may be helpful if we could discuss this in due course.

Best wishes,

Lorna

Lorna Gratton | Director

**UK Government Investments**

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