

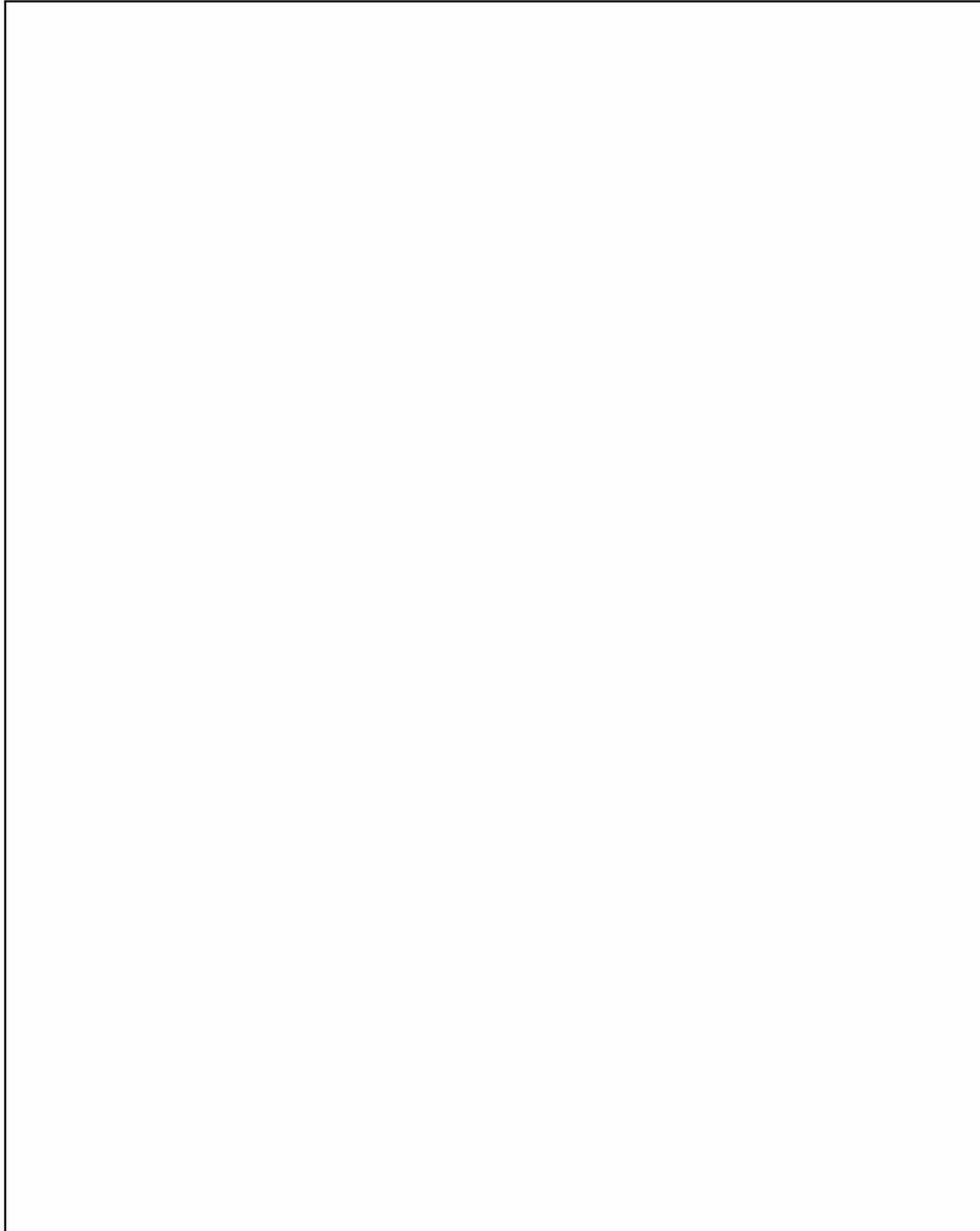
ACTION

CABINET COMMITTEES

Timing: Routine

Date: 22 May 2020

PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS:

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PRIME MINISTER

CABINET STRUCTURES

- 1. This is asking you to agree to the Cabinet structures for managing the response to C-19 in this next phase. We will stand down the MIGs as they have served their purpose. But we need something in their place; particularly to manage any concerns from your Ministers that they will not be involved in decision making. We recommend: i) a lean structure to oversee C19 and that major decisions are taken by the full Cabinet; ii) that we stand up the Cabinet Committees you had agreed to manage the rest of business; and iii) that we use the usual Joint Ministerial Committee mechanisms to manage the DAs. The Cabinet Secretary has agreed these proposals.**
2. Given the significance of the decisions, your Cabinet should be asked to discuss and agree to the Government policy on the C-19 response. You told the Cabinet yesterday that they would meet early next week. We recommend that this is on Tuesday to make decisions in enough time for businesses and schools to prepare. The Cabinet should have a paper to consider. **Do you agree?**
3. It is useful to have a smaller Ministerial group to shape the strategy. You have used the quad for this in recent weeks. We advise that you formalise a small strategy committee in the style of XS. You may want to include the Home Secretary given the importance of enforcement and the border. This Covid

Strategy (CS) Committee should meet on Monday to consider the 1 June package in advance of full Cabinet. **Do you agree? Do you want to include the Home Secretary?**

4. Many issues previously taken by MIGs can now be folded into the existing Committee structures (e.g. international affairs at the NSC). We recommend that a new Covid Operations committee (CO) is established to drive delivery and provide assurance on the implementation of programmes (on the 'XO' model, but meeting less frequently). This should be chaired by CDL, with the Chancellor taking the chair when vulnerability programmes are being discussed to avoid the perception of the CDL marking his own homework. Membership will remain small with just the Health Secretary as the other core member, with others Ministers invited as required. **Do you agree?**
5. The Cabinet Secretary minuted you about the five lines of operation for this next phase: the Covid resilient economy (led by the Chancellor); Smart lockdowns (SoS Health); Vulnerability (CDL); Vaccines and Treatment (SoS BEIS); Supply and Capacity (SoS Health). We expect the CO committee to look at implementation across these lines of operation. The review exercise showed us the importance of a coordinated and disciplined approach to assurance and scrutiny; not least so we don't distract time away from delivery. Simon's team will manage this.
6. Thus far the DAs have been involved in decision making through the MIGs and in COBR. There needs to be a mechanism to discuss and agree on a four-nation approach. In keeping with a move back to normal structures you could convene a Joint Ministerial Committee meeting when needed instead. COBR would stop meeting on Covid, unless we re-entered a crisis situation. It will be important for Ministers to continue to engage with the city Mayors on the policy response but you don't need a Cabinet Committee to do that. **Do you agree to use the JMC to manage conversations with the DAs? And only use COBR if we re-enter a crisis situation?**
7. In February you signed off the Cabinet Committee structures, but we never got them up and running. There are a few questions about membership to resolve. The factors to consider are i) who is needed to make good decisions (which departments should be at the table) and ii) handling issues with the

individuals who may read a lot into whether they are included or excluded. The list of the Committees is attached and the questions are:

- **NSC:** You indicated in February that the Trade and Business Secretaries should no longer be members. Given NSC will now consider all the C-19 impacts for economic security and trade we advise it would be better if they remained on NSC. **Do you agree?**
 - **PBL:** The No10 Parliamentary team think there should be a Cabinet Office minister on PBL to represent your views. Ben Gasgoine suggests Chloe Smith. **Do you agree?**
 - **Climate Action Implementation:** Given the impact of C19 on climate, the Health Secretary should be made a standing member of CAI (which should meet soon). **Do you agree?**
8. Given the seriousness of the economic situation that we are faced with, you may want to discuss with the Chancellor whether he wants to establish an Economic Recovery Council along the lines of the National Economic Council that was used to coordinate the response to the 2008 crisis. We can provide further advice. Essentially the question is whether you and the Chancellor think this sort of formal structure would be useful. In particular it might be helpful to lock in external voices like the Governor of the Bank of England. **Do you want to see further advice and discuss this with the Chancellor?**

HELEN MACNAMARA AND SIMON CASE
22 MAY 2020

Annex A C-19 Cabinet Committees

C-19 Strategy

Membership

Prime Minister (Chair)

Chancellor of the Exchequer

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and First Secretary of State

Secretary of State for the Home Department

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Minister for the Cabinet Office

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy

Terms of Reference

To drive the Government's strategic response to Covid-19, considering the impact of both the virus and the response to it, and setting the direction for the recovery strategy.

C-19 Operations

Membership

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Minister for the Cabinet Office
(Chair)

Chancellor of the Exchequer

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Other Cabinet Ministers will be invited according to the agenda

Terms of Reference

To deliver the policy and operational response to Covid-19.

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