

<b>TITLE/ORGANISATION</b>	Compliance and Assurance Group – Virtual meeting	
<b>DATE/TIME:</b>	11 May 2023 – 10.15am	
<b>List of Attendees:</b>	Jane Holmes Maria Hannon Hannah Murphy NR	Emer Morelli NR Chris McNabb
<b>Apologies:</b>	NR	

### 1. Introduction

Jane opened the meeting.

### 2. Matters Arising

#### Note of Last Meeting

Note of previous meeting agreed by the group. Group noted action points that remain open.

### 3. Updates on:

#### Engagement with the Inquiry Team

Jane confirmed that the TEO Corporate Module 1 statement has been submitted and it is anticipated that this will be released to Core Participants as early as this week. Other Departments are working to finalise their statements.

The new solicitor for Module 2C is taking a different approach and engagement to resolve any questions or issues is on-going.

#### HOCS Reference Group

Confirmed that resourcing is to be considered over a 5-year period to facilitate a possible case for additional funding being made to the Treasury. It was noted that this attempt would likely be unsuccessful.

#### Cabinet Office/Devolved Assembly Engagement

A Directors meeting is due next week, all participants have been busy with Module 1 statements. [AP- Emer will email Jane to outline DoF discussions with the other Devolved Nations so that the Cabinet Office meeting can be updated as appropriate.](#)

Section 21 notice has been issued to the Cabinet Office. The Inquiry has requested that all messages are provided in a non-redacted form regardless of whether they contain personal information. If released these messages may attract significant media attention.

The meeting noted the position of TEO Former Ministers and SpAD phones.

Noted that the Cabinet Office is being investigated by the Information Commissioner for the Government use of WhatsApp messages for official business. The NICS position in relation the use of WhatsApp is currently being investigated.

### 4. Risk Register

Risk Register has been updated and two risks have been moved to red, the aim is to take action to move these risks from red to amber.

[AP- The Compliance and Assurance group is asked to consider the updated Risk Register and share any comments.](#)

## 5. Former Ministers Positions (T&S Expenses)

UK Inquiry will cover Former Ministers expenses as they are dealing with these individuals directly. This will cover all Departments, although not currently Robin Swann as he is covered within the DoH.

Discussed costs for remote attendance, confirmed NICS will not cover these costs unless the person is a Core Participant. Agreed in principle that someone from NICS will need to listen to the hearings and be aware of practical issues as well noting substantive information.

NICS wide approach should be agreed, for previous Inquiries an official listened in and provided a daily update. Important that this is not just one individual but is shared across a team of people. This issue will be raised at the Cross-Departmental meeting.

Discussed the issue of the NICS/DSO listening in and if will this create a perceived inequality if Former Ministers expenses are not paid to facilitate them listening to the same remote hearings. [AP- Paper to be brought to the Compliance and Assurance Group on the issue of attendance at Remote Hearings and the issue of the payment of legal expenses.](#)

## 6. Finance Position Update

Emer provided an update on Departmental budget returns and the importance that all involved see and contribute to these financial returns.

## 7. NICS Staff and Witness Support

**NR** confirmed that the document is ready for issue and is now also published on the Hub. [AP- \*\*NR\*\* to draft a note for HOCS from DoF on the publication of the NICS Staff and Witness Support package.](#)

## 8. Legal Update

Inquiry has now issued their first Section 21 notice; this will likely end up in the public domain. NICS will need to be aware of the implications of this notice. **NR** noted that the importance of discoverable documents has been re-enforced with Departments.

## 9. Module 1 Reflection (Disclosure and Lessons Learned)

It was highlighted that issues with late disclosure for the Module 1 statement created a significant volume of work and the statement had to be completely re-written. A report into this matter has been commissioned and is due this week, the Permanent Secretary has also called in the auditors to consider this matter.

[AP- After it has been viewed by the Permanent Secretary the report into the late Module 1 disclosure will be shared with the Compliance and Assurance Group.](#)

## 10. Future Modules (Procurement Module, likely to be known as Module 6)

Scoping exercise has been issued; Eugene is dealing with the issue that this exercise was not shared with DoF. At present the focus of the scoping exercise is on medical products and PPE, however it is expected that this will eventually expand and will also include services such as communication contracts and Behavioural Insights. Noted that the Michelle O'Neill Module 1 statement has highlighted procurement.

## 11. Any Other Business

No issues raised.

**Date of next meeting: 18 May 2023.**