

From: S 40(2)
To: S 40(2); S 40(2) DfE Private Office; DoF Private Office; Brennan, Mike; DfE Permanent Secretary Support; Reynolds, Joe; Secretary Of State (Kwasi Kwarteng)
Cc: S 40(2); S 40(2); S 40(2); S 40(2); S 40(2);
Subject: INV-2102-2022 - HMT Readout of 26/8/22 : [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up
Date: 26 August 2022 17:16:07
Attachments: image001.jpg
image002.jpg
image003.jpg
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image011.jpg

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Hi all,

Thanks for joining today's meeting of the Northern Ireland Sprint Taskforce. On behalf of S 40(2), please see a brief readout below, including next steps.

Northern Ireland Sprint Taskforce

Attended by CX, BEIS SoS, NI Minister for Finance Conor Murphy, NI Minister for Economy Gordon Lyons, Utility Regulator Chief Executive John French, and DfE, HMT and BEIS officials.

- Northern Ireland Sprint Taskforce members discussed possible delivery arrangements, timelines and legal considerations under both NI and HMG-led delivery solutions.
- Northern Ireland Sprint Taskforce members agreed to proceed with an HMG-led solution on EBSS implementation in NI with NI Ministers for Finance and the Economy, and the Utility Regulator committing their full support to work with HMG (BEIS) to ensure payments are made to households as soon as possible.
- **Actions:** BEIS officials to finalise details for scheme delivery, in consultation with NI DfE officials and UR; HMT and NI DoF officials to liaise on funding arrangements and to finalise funding matters with BEIS officials.

Thanks,
S 40(2)

[Redacted signature block]

From: S 40(2)
Sent: 25 August 2022 18:41
To: Chancellor's Action - HMT <action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>; DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DoF Private Office <Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Brennan, Mike <Mike.Brennan@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Permanent Secretary Support <Permanent.SecretarySupport@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Reynolds, Joe <Joe.Reynolds@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Secretary Of State (Kwasi Kwarteng) <Secretary.State@beis.gov.uk>

Cc: [redacted] S 40(2) [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted] S 40(2) [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted]; [redacted] S 40(2)

Subject: RE: [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up

Hi all,

Please see below an agenda ahead of tomorrow's meeting (Friday) at 10am. Grateful for final confirmation of attendance – please ensure Chancellor's Action and [redacted] S 40(2) are both copied.

- BEIS SoS to update on the timeline for delivering EBSS-equivalent payments via an HMG-led channel, including the legal risks involved in such a process.
- DfE Minister Lyons, or DfE officials, to update on any changes to the legal assessment or timeline in relation to delivering EBSS-equivalent payments via an NI-led channel.
- UR to provide an update on the progress of their delivery preparations in advance, such as preparations and timelines for licence condition changes.
- Discuss and agree preferred option, including immediate next steps on shortening delivery timescales and resolving legal issues.

Do let me know if helpful to discuss. I hope you have a lovely evening in the meantime.

Many thanks

[redacted] S 40(2)

[redacted]

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From: Chancellor's Action - HMT <action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>
Sent: 22 August 2022 10:17
To: DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DoF Private Office <Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Brennan, Mike <Mike.Brennan@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Permanent Secretary Support <Permanent.SecretarySupport@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Reynolds, Joe <Joe.Reynolds@economy-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: [redacted] S 40(2); Chancellor's Action - HMT <action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>; [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted] S 40(2); [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted]; [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted]; [redacted] S 40(2);
[redacted] S 40(2) >
Subject: RE: [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up

Morning all,

I hope you are well.

I understand this may have already been flagged by your officials, but I suggest moving the Ministerial meeting from tomorrow (Tuesday) to **Thursday 25 August at 15.00**.

Grateful if you could confirm whether this changes the list of attendees I already have down:

- Conor Murphy, Minister of Finance
- Neil Gibson, Permanent Secretary
- Eoin Rooney, Minister Murphy's Special Advisor
- Paula Dawson, Minister Murphy's Private Secretary
- Thomas Byrne, Public Spending Directorate

Many thanks

S 40(2)

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From: S 40(2)
Sent: 16 August 2022 17:32
To: DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DoF Private Office <Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Brennan, Mike <Mike.Brennan@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Permanent Secretary Support <Permanent.SecretarySupport@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Reynolds, Joe <Joe.Reynolds@economy-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: S 40(2) Chancellor's Action - HMT <action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>; S 40(2); S 40(2); S 40(2); S 40(2); S 40(2); S 40(2)
Subject: RE: [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up

Hi all,

Many thanks again for your work yesterday. I've provided a readout of the call below, including the next steps. Key things to flag are that officials will be in touch tomorrow to set up the working group, and that we propose diarising the next Ministerial level meeting for Tuesday 23 August.

Do let me know if you have any questions.

Many thanks

S 40(2)

On Monday 15 August, the Chancellor hosted a call with Minister Hargey, Minister Lyons, John French (Chief Executive, Utilities Regulator) and officials from both the Northern Irish and central United Kingdom administrations. The following was discussed:

- **Accounting Officer (AO) assessment:** NICS provided an update on their AO assessment, explaining that it was felt to be significantly risky to deliver this through DfE, and that neither the powers in the Energy Order (2003) or Financial Assistance Act (2009) could be used as it was deemed the size of the payment was significant and would need agreement from an Executive.
- **Timelines:** Potential legal risks aside, it was agreed it was important to understand whether an NI-led or an HMG-led process would be the quickest for delivering payments. This should include determining whether a three month consultation in NI would be necessary, or whether the criminal court process would provide sufficient safeguards, particularly given there are fewer energy companies in NI than GB.
- **GB EBSS:** HMT provided an outline of EBSS in GB, highlighting some of the more challenging policy design questions, and the approach to difficult cases such as park homes residents and pre-payment metres, the latter of which it was agreed would also be a challenge in NI given the higher number of customers who use them. It was agreed that bringing BEIS' expertise to the table would be helpful in helping shape the scheme for NI.
- **Actions:** It was agreed that all attendees shared the objective of getting payments to households as quickly as possible, and that working collaboratively on this to explore both NI-led and HMG-led options would be the most effective mechanism. As such, the agreed next steps were:
 - **Operationalise a joint working group as soon as possible**, including attendees from NICS, HMT, BEIS and UR, and identify priority sprints – **HMG colleagues will be in touch to set this up tomorrow.**
 - **NICS to share further detail on AO assessment** (including legal concerns) with HMT officials to allow officials to work through the detail and assess as part of a joint sprint if there is still a viable NICS-led delivery mechanism.
 - Attendees to meet regularly at Ministerial level until the issue is resolved. **We propose the next meeting should take place at 12.00-12.30 on Tuesday 23 August – grateful for confirmation of attendees please.**

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From: S 40(2)

Sent: 15 August 2022 14:55

To: DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DoF Private Office <Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Brennan, Mike <Mike.Brennan@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Permanent Secretary Support <Permanent.SecretarySupport@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Reynolds, Joe <Joe.Reynolds@economy-ni.gov.uk>

Cc: S 40(2); Chancellor's Action - HMT <action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>; S 40(2)

S 40(2)

S 40(2)

S 40(2)

S 40(2)

Subject: RE: [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up

Hi all,

Many thanks for the quick work in pulling together attendees for this afternoon. You should all now have the invite, but please let me know if it hasn't reached you.

I'm attaching the agenda here too, as per the outline below.

Many thanks

S 40(2)

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From: DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>

Sent: 15 August 2022 12:41

To: S 40(2) DoF Private Office
<Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Brennan, Mike <Mike.Brennan@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Permanent Secretary Support <Permanent.SecretarySupport@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Reynolds, Joe <Joe.Reynolds@economy-ni.gov.uk>

Cc: S 40(2) Chancellor's Action - HMT
<action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>; S 40(2)

S 40(2)

S 40(2)

S 40(2)

S 40(2)

Subject: RE: [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up

Hi S 40(2)

I can confirm John French, Utility Regulator is able to attend the meeting this afternoon.

Kind regards,

S 40(2)

SpAd Support and Records Management Compliance

Department for the Economy
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast, BT4 2JP

S 40(2)

Web: www.economy-ni.gov.uk

From: DfE Private Office

Sent: 15 August 2022 12:17

To: S 40(2) DoF Private Office
<Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Brennan, Mike <Mike.Brennan@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Permanent Secretary Support <Permanent.SecretarySupport@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Reynolds, Joe <Joe.Reynolds@economy-ni.gov.uk>

Cc: S 40(2); DfE Private Office
<Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Chancellor's Action - HMT
<action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>; S 40(2)

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S 40(2)

S 40(2)

Subject: RE: [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up

Hi S 40(2)

Just for clarity, is the Chancellor joining the meeting this afternoon?

From the agenda below it isn't clear if the meeting is involving Ministers or just departmental officials.

Kind regards,

S 40(2)

SpAd Support and Records Management Compliance

Department for the Economy
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast, BT4 2JP

S 40(2)

Web: www.economy-ni.gov.uk

From: S 40(2) >

Sent: 15 August 2022 10:00

To: DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DoF Private Office <Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; Brennan, Mike <Mike.Brennan@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Permanent Secretary Support <Permanent.SecretarySupport@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Reynolds, Joe <Joe.Reynolds@economy-ni.gov.uk>

Cc: [redacted] S 40(2); Chancellor's Action - HMT
<action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>; [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted] S 40(2) [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted] S 40(2)
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Subject: RE: [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up

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Morning all,

I wanted to pick up on the suggestion for a meeting this week to follow up on the agreed next steps from last Wednesday. Could we look to get this arranged for **15.30-16.00 this afternoon?** I'm copying [redacted] S 40(2) on our side who can help with arranging this.

Following on from where it was left on Wednesday, my suggested approach to this meeting would be:

1. NICS to provide an update on AO assessment (including legal concerns) to deliver EBSS-equivalent support through the Department for Economy and the NI Utility Regulator by the end of the week
2. UR to update on conversations with energy suppliers on both broad options (i.e. delivery via DfE and UR, and an UKG-led route)
3. HMG to outline how EBSS scheme works in GB

Grateful for confirmation this morning on attendance and the proposed agenda.

Do give me a call if it's helpful to discuss this further.

Many thanks

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From: DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>

Sent: 12 August 2022 15:34

To: [redacted] S 40(2); DoF Private Office
<Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>;
Brennan, Mike <Mike.Brennan@economy-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Permanent Secretary Support
<Permanent.SecretarySupport@economy-ni.gov.uk>; Reynolds, Joe <Joe.Reynolds@economy-ni.gov.uk>

Cc: [redacted] S 40(2) Chancellor's Action - HMT
<action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>; [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted]; [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted] S 40(2) [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted]; [redacted] S 40(2)

Subject: RE: [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up

[redacted] S 40(2)

Please see the update below.

Thanks for the email.

Following the meeting on Wednesday, where all participants agreed that the preferable solution in terms of speed, simplicity and low risk was for a direct payment from HMT to Northern Ireland energy providers, we can provide the following update.

Mike Brennan, the DfE AO, will report on the legal advice on Monday as agreed, however it simply confirms the view expressed at the meeting.

DfE supports the UR offering advice to assist in the delivery of a UK-wide scheme in NI and that DfE/Minister is happy to input to any UK policy development process that needed to reflect NI nuance in the broader scheme.

Kind regards,

[redacted] S 40(2)

SpAd Support and Records Management Compliance

Department for the Economy
Netherleigh
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Belfast, BT4 2JP

[redacted] S 40(2)

Web: www.economy-ni.gov.uk

From: [redacted] S 40(2)
Sent: 12 August 2022 13:05
To: DoF Private Office <Private.Office@finance-ni.gov.uk>; DfE Private Office <Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: [redacted] S 40(2) Chancellor's Action - HMT
<action.chancellors@hmtreasury.gov.uk>; [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted]; [redacted] S 40(2)
[redacted] S 40(2) [redacted] S 40(2)
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Subject: [Official Sensitive] Chancellor and NI Ministers EBSS Follow up

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Dear Private Offices (Department for Economy, Department for Finance),

Following the Chancellor’s meeting with Minister Lyons, Minister Hargey and the NI Utility Regulator John French, all agreed the importance of finding a workable solution to delivering equivalent support to the EBSS in NI as quickly as possible.

During the meeting, it was agreed that:

- NICS would provide an update on AO assessment (including legal concerns) to deliver EBSS-equivalent support through the Department for Economy and the NI Utility Regulator by the end of the week; and
- The Utility Regulator would provide an update regarding the engagement on both broad options (i.e. delivery via DfE and UR, and an UKG-led route) with the remaining 3 energy suppliers.

We would like to check on the status of receiving this information – noting that there is an officials meeting this afternoon which may cover some of point 2. The Chancellor remains very keen to meet early next week but in order to take that forward, we require this outstanding information to consider all options in the round.

Kind regards,

S 40(2)

[Redacted]
Her Majesty’s Treasury | Corporate Tax Team | Business and International Tax Group
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