

Annex D: Extracts of email correspondence used to inform the Press Office Response.

Message 1:

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 11:12 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Richard Piggin [REDACTED] Spads Office (DSIT)
[REDACTED] Secretary Of State (Michelle Donelan)
[REDACTED] Director of Communication Office (DSIT)
[REDACTED] Permanent Secretary (DSIT)
[REDACTED] DSIT Comms Clearances
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Molyneux, Rebecca (DSIT)
[REDACTED] Mian, Emran (DSIT) [REDACTED]
Dean Creamer [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: SPADS TO CLEAR: Simon Blagden queries

Morning [REDACTED],

Just flagging that we've been approached by Private Eye on Simon Blagden. They reference the statement we sent to the Guardian last week, saying that Simon had nothing to do with Horizon. They have asked us to confirm we were accurately reported on and for us to say briefly how we established this.

Will re-issue the lines below at noon if no concerns.

Many thanks,

A DSIT spokesperson said:

"Simon Blagden served as Chair of Fujitsu Telecommunications from 2004 to 2019, with Post Office Horizon software provided by Fujitsu Services - a separate organisation with a separate board.

"The Post Office scandal was an appalling miscarriage of justice which Simon was in no way involved in."

Background:

- Simon's involvement in Fujitsu was raised by officials at the time of his appointment, as you would expect as part of the recruitment process. It was established that Simon served as Chair of Fujitsu Telecommunications from

2004 to 2019, with Post Office Horizon software provided by Fujitsu Services - a separate organisation with a separate board.

Message 2:

From: Richard Piggin [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, January 12, 2024 4:48 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED] Spads Office (DSIT)

[REDACTED] Secretary Of State (Michelle Donelan)

[REDACTED]; Director of Communication Office (DSIT)

[REDACTED] Permanent Secretary (DSIT)

[REDACTED] DSIT Comms Clearances

[REDACTED] Molyneux, Rebecca (DSIT)

[REDACTED] Mian, Emran (DSIT) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Dean Creamer

[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: SPADS TO CLEAR: Simon Blagden queries

Background:

The BDUK Register of Interests has been updated to reflect the interests that were discussed with Simon as part of the appointment process. These interests are not live conflicts, but the register has been updated to avoid any perception of conflicts.

Message 3:

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, January 12, 2024 9:16 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: Spads Office (DSIT) [REDACTED] Secretary Of State (Michelle Donelan) [REDACTED] Director of Communication Office (DSIT)

[REDACTED] Permanent Secretary (DSIT)

[REDACTED] DSIT Comms Clearances

[REDACTED] Molyneux, Rebecca (DSIT)

[REDACTED] Richard Piggitt [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mian, Emran (DSIT) [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: SPADS TO CLEAR: Simon Blagden queries

The FT have been in touch as they are publishing article today discussing Simon Blagden's role at BDUK and potential conflicts of interest arising from his previous lobbying for CityFibre Ltd. The journalist has said that the story will also report that Mr Blagden has been a long standing Conservative donor and was non-executive chairman of Fujitsu Telecommunications Ltd in the UK for 14 years, until 2019, during which time many of the issues with Horizon and the Post Office surfaced. He has asked if BDUK are aware of Simon's former lobbying on behalf of CityFibre.

We will send out the lines cleared yesterday (pasted below for ease) in 30 minutes if no issues. Thanks!

A DSIT spokesperson said:

"Simon Blagden was appointed through the usual robust processes, that we have in place to ensure appointments are handled appropriately and guard against potential conflicts."

"Board members, including the Chair, have no involvement in the awarding of contracts. In line with usual protocol, Simon Blagden declared previous engagements and political activity on his appointment."

Background:

- Simon's involvement in Fujitsu was raised by officials at the time of his appointment, as you would expect as part of the recruitment process. It was established that Simon served as Chair of Fujitsu Telecommunications from 2004 to

2019, with Post Office Horizon software provided by Fujitsu Services - a separate organisation with a separate board.

- Simon Blagden's appointment as Chair of BDUK followed a fair and open process, against a strong and diverse field of applicants.
- Political donations related to Simon Blagden are declared on the Electoral Commission website, the correct and proper place for declaring such activity.
- The Post Office scandal was an appalling miscarriage of justice which Simon was in no way involved in.
- The Avre Partnership's work with CityFibre ended several months before Simon's appointment as Chair of BDUK.
- Non-Executive Directors serve an advisory role and have no involvement in the awarding of contracts.

Message 4:

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2024 4:49 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: Spads Office (DSIT) [REDACTED] Secretary Of State (Michelle Donelan) [REDACTED] Director of Communication Office (DSIT)

[REDACTED] Permanent Secretary (DSIT)

[REDACTED] DSIT Comms Clearances

[REDACTED] Molyneux, Rebecca (DSIT)

[REDACTED]; Richard Piggitt [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Mian, Emran (DSIT) [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: SPADS TO CLEAR: Simon Blagden queries

As per [REDACTED] WA, have updated the background to reflect that Simon's interests were historic - pasting below for ease. We will issue these lines now. Many thanks for your input all!

Background:

The BDUK Register of Interests has been updated to reflect historical interests that were discussed with Simon as part of the appointment process. These interests are not live conflicts, but the register has been updated to avoid any perception of conflicts

Message 5:

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2024 4:06 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Spads Office (DSIT) [REDACTED] Secretary Of State (Michelle Donelan) [REDACTED] Director of Communication Office (DSIT) [REDACTED] Permanent Secretary (DSIT) [REDACTED] DSIT Comms Clearances [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Richard Piggin [REDACTED]
Subject: SPADS TO CLEAR: Simon Blagden queries

Hi [REDACTED]

Just sharing the handling of Simon Blagden queries from today. We are also clearing with the Perm Sec in tandem in the interest of time. If you could get back to me in the next 15 minutes that would be much appreciated.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]
CLEARED BY: Richard Piggin (policy), [REDACTED] (comms)

JOURNALIST (OUTLET): [REDACTED] (Guardian/Observer), [REDACTED] (freelance)

DEADLINE: 4PM TODAY

ISSUE:

- Over the last few days, DSIT press inbox has received several queries on Simon Blagden, Chair of BDUK, and his interests and involvement in Fujitsu.
- The issued responses to these queries can be found in **ANNEX A** and **ANNEX B**.
- We have since had a follow up question from a freelance journalist, who asked if there is a reason that Avre Partnership and other companies Mr Blagden owns are now listed on the BDUK [Register of Interests](#).
- This has since been updated to reflect Simon's positions at the Avre Partnership and Larkspur International.
- A separate query from [REDACTED] of the Guardian asks the following questions:
 1. Ahead of Mr Blagden's appointment to UK government roles, what due diligence was conducted in relation to his former role with Fujitsu?

2. Is the government aware whether Mr Blagden has any remaining financial interests in Fujitsu?
 3. Has the government established whether there are any outstanding legal liabilities from his time at Fujitsu?
- DSIT Press Office have been asked to comment.

COMMS HANDLING:

- On the freelance query, we propose issuing the following line on background, pointing to the fact that the register of interests has been updated:

Background:

- *The BDUK Register of Interests has been updated to reflect the interests that were discussed with Simon as part of the appointment process. These interests are not live conflicts, but the register has been updated to avoid any perception of conflicts.*
- On the Guardian query, we propose issuing the lines in **ANNEX B**, with an additional line on background to answer Q1 (we believe Q2 and Q3 are not for us to answer).

Background:

- *Simon's involvement in Fujitsu was raised by officials at the time of his appointment, as you would expect as part of the recruitment process. It was established that Simon served as Chair of Fujitsu Telecommunications from 2004 to 2019, with Post Office Horizon software provided by Fujitsu Services - a separate organisation with a separate board.*

ANNEX A – lines issued on Simon's position at Fujitsu:

A DSIT spokesperson said:

"Simon Blagden served as Chair of Fujitsu Telecommunications from 2004 to 2019, with Post Office Horizon software provided by Fujitsu Services - a separate organisation with a separate board.

"The Post Office scandal was an appalling miscarriage of justice which Simon was in no way involved in."

Background:

- Simon Blagden's appointment as Chair of BDUK followed a fair and open process, against a strong and diverse field of applicants. He continues to oversee the agency as it delivers the rollout of faster broadband and mobile

coverage across the UK, and gigabit capable networks at a faster rate than any other country in Europe.

ANNEX B – lines issued on Simon’s interests:

A DSIT spokesperson said:

“Simon Blagden was appointed through the usual robust processes, that we have in place to ensure appointments are handled appropriately and guard against potential conflicts.”

“Board members, including the Chair, have no involvement in the awarding of contracts. In line with usual protocol, Simon Blagden declared previous engagements and political activity on his appointment.”

Background:

- Simon Blagden’s appointment as Chair of BDUK followed a fair and open process, against a strong and diverse field of applicants.
- Political donations related to Simon Blagden are declared on the Electoral Commission website, the correct and proper place for declaring such activity.
- The Post Office scandal was an appalling miscarriage of justice which Simon was in no way involved in.
- The Avre Partnership’s work with CityFibre ended several months before Simon’s appointment as Chair of BDUK.
- Non-Executive Directors serve an advisory role and have no involvement in the awarding of contracts.
- Simon Blagden served as Chair of Fujitsu Telecommunications from 2004 to 2019, with Post Office Horizon software provided by Fujitsu Services - a separate organisation with a separate board.



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

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