

# TCI National Security Council (NSC)

## Meeting: COVID-19

In attendance as members of the NSC were the Hon. Deputy Governor, Hon. Deputy Premier, Attorney General and Commissioner of Police. Also in attendance as invited guest were the Hon. Minister of Health, Hon. Minister of Tourism, the National Security Strategy lead, officials from Ministry of Health, Ministry of Tourism, Inter-Health Canada and Public Health England.

At this meeting the NSC were:

- updated from the Ministry of Health that there are currently no suspected and/or confirmed cases of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) within the Turks and Caicos Islands
- updated on the global statistics for COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) including confirmed cases in the Caribbean region, specifically the Dominican Republic, St. Bart's and St. Martin as well as confirmed cases in Florida
- updated on the Ministry of Health's effort to identify a swiftest route for laboratory testing
- updated on specific advice from Public Health England and the Ministry of Health as set out in recent public notices
- updated on the current reporting requirement by cruise ships prior to arrival in TCI and took a decision to deny entry to any cruise ship that has a suspected case of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)
- updated on plans to streamline the current screening process at the Providenciales International Airport (including Fixed Based Operators)
- updated on Cabinet approval for Contingency Funding for the Ministry of Health, and agreed to fast track the recruitment of additional staff for surveillance and screening
- updated by the Ministry of Health and Inter-Health Canada on the protocols in place to prevent and/or reduce community transmission of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) including quarantine
- updated on plans to engage the National Security Advisory Group and

other critical key stakeholders in the public and private sector

Finally, the NSC agreed a series of key actions for officials to report back in the coming days and for the NSC to meet weekly on the issue of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) for the foreseeable future.

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## British investments in Peru to continue after EU exit

Lima – Mark Menzies MP, the Prime Minister’s trade envoy for Peru, Argentina, Chile and Colombia visited Peru from 25 to 28 February. During this first official visit from the United Kingdom after its departure from the European Union on January 31, Boris Johnson’s envoy said:

EU Exit opens a fantastic commercial opportunity for the relationship between the United Kingdom and Peru.

Menzies expressed United Kingdom’s intention to deepen the collaboration between both countries. In that sense, he shared the interest of working closely in sectors such as infrastructure, climate change, renewable energies, sustainable mining, among others. He assured:

We are very interested in supporting Peru in the reconstruction process, in the north of the country. We can offer our UK companies’ expertise in sustainable infrastructure in areas where the population is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Menzies accompanied President Martin Vizcarra, the Minister of the Environment Fabiola Muñoz and Her Majesty’s Ambassador Kate Harrisson to Tambopata to participate in the event by which the 2019 Pan American and Parapan American Games were declared the first green games in history. During the ceremony, he said:

It has been an honor for us not only to contribute with quality infrastructure in these Lima 2019 Games, but also in measuring the carbon footprint and preparing the guide on how to organise games in a sustainable way.

During his visit, Mark Menzies also shared the desire to learn about Peru’s

experience in organising the COP20 climate summit in 2014, as this year's edition is to be held in Glasgow, Scotland.

Menzies' official agenda also included meetings with the Minister of Transport and Communications, Carlos Lozada, and the Director of the Reconstruction Authority, Amalia Moreno. With them he discussed projects and opportunities for the provision of sustainable infrastructure in areas of Peru that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The Trade Envoy assured:

Our experience in delivering timely and quality infrastructure projects at the Pan American Games has shown that we are ready to support the process of rebuilding the northern area of Peru that was destroyed by the flooding caused by the El Niño Costero phenomenon in 2017.

### **More than infrastructure**

Menzies also visited the National Institute of Neurological Sciences in Barrios Altos, where one of the ten mobile clinics supplied by the British company MCC London Limited to the Ministry of Health operates.

These clinics can be set up and operate in just 45 minutes, and offer services in cardiology, endocrinology, internal medicine and more. One of these mobile clinics was used to support the medical services provided to the victims of the tragic deflagration in Villa El Salvador. About this effort, Menzies concluded:

Infrastructure is basic to good health care and I am pleased to see that British technology is enabling the Peruvian government to have facilities that are focused on the needs of patients and aimed at improving health outcomes.

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## **Warwickshire marketing bosses jailed**

Appearing at Southwark Crown Court on Friday 28 February, Gareth Donald Onions (66) was jailed for 5 years and 6 months, while David Ronald Webb (73) was jailed for 4 years and 2 months.

The pair, both from Tanworth-in-Arden, Warwickshire, were joined in court by Glenn Andrew Delany (67), from Cotteridge, Birmingham, who was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment, suspended for 2 years, after he helped Gareth Onions and David Webb carry out their offences.

During proceedings, the court heard that Gareth Onions and David Webb bought a field marketing company in 1997, assisting consumer brands market and promote their products in retail outlets. The marketing firm traded as The Brand Company and between 1997 and 2013 operated under the guise of seven different limited liability companies.

However, the last of the seven companies, DSPS Field Marketing Ltd, went into Creditors Voluntary Liquidation in April 2013 after which it was uncovered that Gareth Onions and David Webb not only owed millions to HMRC but they had also breached their directorship disqualifications.

Together with HMRC's Fraud Investigation Service, the Insolvency Service uncovered that The Brand Company submitted their last annual accounts in 2002 before defaulting on their tax liabilities, resulting in a cumulative debt of more than £5 million to HMRC. This was despite the marketing company continuing to deduct tax and National Insurance from their employees' salaries.

To help hide their activities and to prevent any recovery action by their creditors, including HMRC, Gareth Onions and David Webb repeatedly closed the operating company before purchasing the assets themselves through a new company in a succession of pre-pack administration deals.

This allowed the marketing bosses to start up all over again under a different name so that The Brand Company could continue trading undetected.

Further enquiries by the Insolvency Service, also found that the pair had both been disqualified twice while running the marketing company. David Webb received directorship disqualifications in 2008 for 5-and-a-half years and a further 5-year ban in 2010, while Gareth Onions was banned in 2010 for 4 years and another 5- year ban in 2013.

The bans should have restricted their ability to manage limited companies but this did not deter Gareth Onions and David Webb. Throughout this period, not only did the marketing bosses keep the same workforce and deal with existing customers, the pair enjoyed substantial salaries and lavish expenses all billed to the company. This included private healthcare, expensive company cars, golf club membership and the use of company credit cards for personal use.

Ian Hackett, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

Onions and Webb deliberately stole taxpayer's money to fund their lifestyle and showed a total disregard for their employees.

By working with partners such as the Insolvency Service, we can effectively tackle tax evasion, which deprives us all of money that should be funding our public services.

We encourage anyone with information about tax evasion to report it online or call our Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.

Glenn Wicks, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Gareth Onions and David Webb employed duplicitous tactics for the majority of The Brand Company's lifetime, in attempt to avoid paying tax, redress any losses owed to their creditors and comply with their disqualifications.

Thanks to the joint work with HMRC, the courts have recognised the severity of their unscrupulous conduct and their sentences should serve as a stark warning to others that we will investigate those that think they can flout their responsibilities as directors and enrich themselves at the expense of the public purse.

His Honour Judge Hehir also made an order for POCA asset confiscation proceedings against all three men.

The sentence result was announced at Southwark Crown Court by HHJ Hehir.

At an earlier hearing on 7 February 2020 at Southwark Crown Court, Gareth Onions pleaded guilty to breaching his directorship disqualification, multiple counts of cheating the public revenue amounting to over £2.6 million and one charge of money laundering.

At the same hearing, David Webb pleaded guilty to one count each of cheating the public revenue of over £1.6 million, of breaching his directorship disqualification and money laundering.

The Finance Director throughout The Brand Company's trading activities, Glenn Delaney, pleaded guilty to one count each of aiding and abetting Onions & Webb in the breach of disqualifications and cheating the public revenue of £348k.

DSPTS CONTRACT SERVICES LTD, 1997-2004;

IVYBUSH LTD, 2004-2005;

TIGERPARK LTD, 2005-2008;

DELTAWORLD LTD, 2008-2011;

DSPTS REALISATIONS LTD, 2011-2012;

DSPTS FIELD MARKETING LTD, 2012-2013

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

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# Ponteland flood defence to be improved

These works form part of the Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme which runs along the southern side of the River Pont, adjacent to Callerton Lane.

The proposed future works will ensure the better protection of more than 250 residential properties in the Ponteland area.

The works will largely take place on private land at the rear of Lane Nurseries and the Auberne property, between Callerton Lane and the foot bridge at the Memorial Hall. A small amount of work is also proposed on land owned by Ponteland Town Council, adjacent to the Memorial Hall.

In order to allow the future improvements to the flood defences, 40 trees are required to be felled as part of the programme. The trees are in the path of the proposed flood defence and cannot be saved, every effort has been taken to minimise the number of trees that need to be felled.

Although the removal of any trees is regrettable, the Environment Agency plans on planting a further 200 trees to compensate for the loss of those removed. The requirement to fell the trees was identified in two previous public consultations, and the removal has been arranged with all landowners.

As part of the project, suggestions are being welcomed from the local community about where in Ponteland they would like to see the trees being planted. People can send their ideas to the following address [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk) using the title: 'Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme – TREES'.

The tree removal will increase light to the river channel and will allow for the creation of a diverse range of habitats along the river corridor.

The flood defence works will be beneficial to the local community in a variety of ways.

- The flood defence will help to protect over 250 properties from the risk of flooding from the River Pont
- The tree removal provides the opportunity to improve Ponteland River habitats and biodiversity including plant and animal life

Leila Huntington, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Manager for the North East, said: "Over the past few weeks we've seen the impacts of Storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge across the country. With climate change, the risk of flooding will increase and flood defences play an important part in reducing flood risk and helping communities to be more resilient.

"The essential replacement of flood defences in Ponteland will ensure they continue to protect 250 homes from flooding."

Leila comments about the felling of 40 trees. She said: “We have a policy for replanting five trees for every one tree that is removed. This means that in Ponteland we will be replanting over 200 trees and we’re keen for local people to suggest where they would like the saplings to go. This could be in school grounds or on the site of a popular public green space.”

Former IT consultant, Andy Anderson, has been a resident in the town for nearly 40-years, and for two of those years he’s been an active flood warden. Talking about what it’s like being a flood warden, he said: “It’s a very useful way of keeping in touch with people in and around Ponteland.”

Andy is currently one of eight flood wardens in the town.

Andy talks about Ponteland’s Flood Alleviation Scheme. He said: “Keeping the flood defences up-to-date is essential especially with the change in our current climate conditions, which is why the Flood Alleviation Scheme is vital for the local community – helping to protect us and provide peace of mind.”

Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme is just one of many schemes across the North East which better protect properties and businesses. In the North East, £127million is being invested between 2015 and 2021 to create or improve new flood and coastal defences. This investment will better protect over 7,000 homes from the risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

People can learn further details about the Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme by visiting

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/north-east/ponteland-flood-alleviation-scheme-information>

Also, to find out if you are living in a flood risk area and for information on how to sign up for flood alerts please visit the Environment Agency website <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings>

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## **Britain is back: Liz Truss calls for new rules at WTO to tackle unfair trade practices**

The International Trade Secretary has today called for a new crack-down on unfair trade practices and protectionism at the World Trade Organization.

Liz Truss hit out at “industrial subsidies, state-owned enterprises and forced technology transfer” as she made the first speech by a British minister at the WTO since the UK became a member in its own right.

She told the Organization's General Council meeting of 164 Ambassadors from around the world that it is critical for nations to work together to reform the WTO so that it is modernised and forward looking.

Speaking in Geneva, the cabinet minister pledged to work with all nations that share the UK's multilateral vision to:

- update the WTO rulebook to tackle unfair practices
- turn the rise in protectionist measures
- ensure the WTO works for all countries, small and large \*seek a fairer deal for developing countries to shape rules and trade their way to prosperity

Announcing that "Britain is back", Liz Truss used the speech to position the UK as a world leader in setting standards in areas such as services and digital, and ensuring the WTO takes advantage of the digital revolution powering the global economy.

**The Trade Secretary said:**

The UK will, like every other sovereign country, assert its ability to set its own laws and regulations in line with our WTO commitments, reflecting our own circumstances and ideas, while working tirelessly alongside other WTO Members to drive reform.

We will make the case to update the WTO rulebook to tackle underlying trade tensions such as industrial subsidies, state-owned enterprises and forced technology transfer.

We will encourage and empower small countries to play a role in shaping the global trading system, to trade their way out of poverty, and seek a fairer deal.

**Telling WTO members that the UK wants to "turn the rise in protectionist measures around", Liz Truss also said:**

The more we allow people to shape their own lives, remove barriers to enterprise within and between nations, and allow human ingenuity to flourish, the more rewards we will all reap.

So, we will work with all nations that share this multilateral vision, to lead the defence of free, fair, rules-based international trade, pioneering a route to prosperity that lies through working together, not protectionism.



**She added:**

I am proud of the UK that explores the new frontiers of the 21st century global economy, pushing for that same liberalisation in trade in services, helping to turn around recent protectionist trends and to help deliver the benefits of the global digital revolution for all members, large or small.