

**Minutes of a meeting of the Council of Minister's
– Emergency Advisory Group ("EAG") –
Held on Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 2.00pm
In the King Orry Room and via MS Teams**

Present:

Hon Graham Cregeen, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, Vice-Chair
Mr Rob Mercer MLC, Tynwald Representative
Mrs Jacqueline Bridson
Mr Steven Christian
Mr Peter Davidson
Professor Peter Edge (*via MS Teams)
Dr Rachel Glover
Ms Julie Hotchkiss (*via MS Teams)
Mr John Spellman
Mr Jonathan Wild

In Attendance:

Mr D Davies, Chief Executive, Department of Home Affairs
Mr C Phillips, Policy and Performance Manager, Cabinet Office (Secretariat)

Apologies:

Action

001/2021 Welcome

Prior to the election of a Chair, the group invited the Vice-Chair (the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs) to temporarily chair the meeting.

A welcome was extended to attendees – recognising the pro-bono provision of both time and expertise.

002/2021 Declarations of Interest or Conflict

The group agreed a register of EAG members' interests relevant be collated and published on the Government website – in the interests of transparency. It was noted that members' interests would also be reviewed at the commencement of each meeting against the agenda items.

The group agreed that minutes generally be action-centred and collective, and remarks not be attributed to individuals, however where there was dissent, that this could be recorded and attributed as required.

**Action: Secretariat to collate a register of members' interests (Sec)
– and note any conflicts at the start of each meeting.**

003/2021 Emergency Advisory Group Board Members' Induction

PowerPoint of 06.04.21

The group received an officer presentation outlining an overview of the Isle of Man Government, Council of Ministers, decision making processes and structures.

The importance of the seven 'Principles of Public Life' was shared.

The speed of the policy response during the height of the pandemic was described.

The group recognised their advisory function, noting scope to proactively refer identified issues to the Council of Ministers.

It was noted that the group needed Treasury approval to commission paid work.

The Vice-Chair recalled the unprecedented challenges presented during the height of the pandemic at pace.

The group noted it would be useful both to reflect on key learning from the pandemic response to date but also to progress proactively current matters.

The group noted the need to foster joined-up approaches between business, charity, and government for the future – and how better to assess and identify private sector offers of assistance.

After consideration, the Group **noted** the presentation and the information therein.

004/2021 EAG Terms of Reference

Paper 001/2021

The Group discussed the previously circulated – and Tynwald endorsed – EAG Terms of Reference. Further comment was invited at the next meeting.

005/2021 Election of the EAG Chair

Discussion Item

Pending Publication

The Group turned to a discussion in respect of the need to appoint a Chair for the EAG.

The group **agreed** the following:

- The Chair should be resident on-Island.
- The position could rotate according to the topic at hand.

It was decided that the Vice-Chair be invited to chair the initial series of meetings, until further clarity was known regarding the group's work plan and the group had begun to know each other better.

IT options to support the group were discussed, including the need for a Microsoft Teams Group (or similar) to support collaborative working

Action: The Vice-Chair to temporarily chair the first series of meetings. (Min JHA)

Action: The Secretariat to explore supporting IT options to aid communication between group members. (Sec)

006/2021 Issues for Consideration by the Group

Discussion Item

The Group turned to a discussion in respect of issues for consideration by the Group, comprising the following:

- The Vice-Chair would be updating the Council of Ministers with the group's discussion items.
- A revised pandemic plan was being finalised, with opportunity for useful input.

In the first instance, the group identified some broad themes where they felt they would seek clarification from Council.

After consideration, the Group invited the Vice-Chair to seek a steer on topics of priority for which EAG opinion was sought as well as updating the Council of Ministers with the group's discussion items.

Action: Vice Chair to update Council on the content of EAG discussions – and comment on areas of focus for the EAG. (Min JHA)

007/2021 Any Other Business

Pending Publication

a) Discussion of the 'Exit Strategy' and the impact of the 'Kent' and 'Indian' variants.

The group heard a presentation on noted publically available data around variants, and the likelihood of continued evolutionary pressure resulting in more transmissible variants of concern with greater vaccine resistance every few months.

The group noted recent Public Health England data indicating that one vaccine dose only had about 30% protection (prevention of symptomatic infection) against the B1.617.2 Indian variant of concern (prevalent in Liverpool and the North West but widespread in England), and appeared to need two vaccine doses before high prevention (~ 80%) was seen. Other data suggested this variant was significantly more transmissible than the 'Kent' variant.

The impact of 'long Covid' was also discussed.

The group noted this alongside Government's ambition of unrestricted travel between the Island and the rest of the British Isles by 28 June 2021.

The group noted that the Public Health Directorate / Cabinet Office was responsible to the Council of Ministers for policy development on the Exit Strategy and would be looking to see what appropriate support it could offer.

The group noted the need for inclusivity with public communications – to all sections of the Island's community, including the elderly.

The group noted potential Human Rights challenges where differentiation was made between vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

The group recognised that Contact Tracing was an important line of defence. The success of the tracing team to date was recognised; it was noted that the operation of the contact tracing regime was not publicly available at present. It was agreed that a short briefing explaining how the tracing process operates would be prepared for the group to enable it to consider this matter further.

Action: Secretariat to seek a concise update from the Contract Tracing Team for the EAG. (Sec)

008/2021 Date of Next Meeting

The EAG determined that their next meeting take place on Friday 04th June 2021 at 1.00pm.

Pending Publication

Action: Secretariat to issue the meeting invite.

(Sec)

The meeting closed at 4:05pm

Signed:

Date: