

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

PRESS NOTICE

UPDATE AND FURTHER HEARING ON 24 NOVEMBER 2021

The Commission of Inquiry (“the COI”) was issued on 19 January 2021 to look into whether corruption, abuse of office or other serious dishonesty may have taken place amongst public, elected and statutory officials in recent years; and to make appropriate recommendations as to governance and the operation of the law enforcement and justice systems in the BVI. The Rt Hon Sir Gary Hickinbottom is the sole Commissioner.

At a COI hearing on 22 October 2021, the Commissioner issued a number of directions to ensure the completion of all outstanding evidential matters. He has granted a number of extensions of time for compliance with those directions.

The Commissioner has now scheduled a further hearing commencing at 9am on Wednesday 24 November 2021 at which he will hear further evidence. The logistics and detailed timetable for that hearing are not yet finalised; but that evidence will include further oral evidence from HE Governor John Rankin. Following the provision of additional documentary evidence on behalf of the elected Ministers, the Commissioner also intends to take oral evidence from a small number of other witnesses. Those witnesses will be confirmed shortly.

Having received a list of those matters on which they wish to file joint closing written submissions, the Commissioner has given the Attorney General and the elected Ministers permission to do so limited to 20 pages. He has stressed the importance of adhering to that page count. Once those submissions are received, the Commissioner will consider if there is a need to hear oral submissions from Counsel instructed on behalf of the Attorney General and the elected Ministers. Any oral submissions are likely to be limited to matters arising from the written submissions.

Silk Legal on behalf of the Members of the House of Assembly (except the elected Ministers and the Attorney General) have neither submitted a list of any matters upon which they wish to make closing submissions as required by the Commissioner’s 22 October 2021 Order, nor have they applied for an extension of time to do so. Similarly, they have neither filed submissions in relation to the Sea Cow’s Bay Project (which they previously indicated they may wish to do), nor sought an extension of time. In the circumstances, Silk Legal will not be permitted to make oral closing submissions.

It is the Commissioner’s intention to deal with all outstanding evidential matters, and any final oral submissions, on 24 November 2021.

Steven Chandler
Secretary to the Commission

11 November 2021