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The Rt Hon Lord Pickles  
Chair, Advisory Committee on Business  
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1 Horse Guards Road  
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Our reference: MC2022/03710

30 March 2022

Dear Eric,

Thank you for your letter of 23 February to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, relating to Esther McVey's commitment with a speaking agency. I have been asked to reply as the Minister with policy responsibility for the Business Appointment Rules.

From the correspondence you enclosed in your letter, I understand that Ms McVey has carried out just one speaking engagement, and I concur that if this were a one-off speech, she would not have been required to seek the Committee's advice. However, as Ms McVey joined the speaking agency to take up this paid opportunity, I agree that Ms McVey should have sought ACoBA's advice in this instance.

I note Ms McVey's confirmation that, contrary to the press coverage of this speech, she did not provide advice on lobbying or discuss her former Ministerial role during this engagement. I agree with the Committee's assessment that this is a minor breach, and further action would be disproportionate in this case. The publication of your correspondence has, in itself, ensured public transparency on this issue and clarity in relation to any future declarations.

I would like to thank the Committee for your ongoing work on these matters.

**Yours sincerely**

**Lord True CBE**