

From the Chairman



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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You asked for the Committee's advice about accepting the following part-time, paid appointments as a consultant with SIGMA Energy Limited (SIGMA).

When considering your application, the Committee took into account that that you had no had direct official dealings with SIGMA in your ministerial capacity. Furthermore, you had no dealings with any competitors of the companies during your last two years in office. The Committee also noted that you have not had access to commercially sensitive information about any competitors.

The Committee noted your responsibilities with SIGMA will be to provide strategic advice, and advice on the regulatory environment relating to the biomass industry, as well as on political trends. This role may involve making representations to Ministers or officials, or arranging meetings with them. However, for both appointments, the usual conditions that the Committee recommends around lobbying (as set out below) will continue to apply.

Taking into account all the circumstances, including the fact that it is now seven months since you left ministerial office, our advice is that we see no reason why you should not take up the appointment forthwith, subject to the following conditions:

- that you should not draw on any privileged information available to you as a Minister; and
- for two years from your last day in office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of your new employers, their parent companies or their clients.

It might be helpful if I add that lobbying is defined in the Business Appointment Rules in the following way: "Lobbying in this context means that the former Minister should not engage

in communication with Government - including Ministers, special advisers and officials - with a view to influencing a Government decision or policy in relation to their own interests, or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted”.

I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up the appointments, or if it is announced that you will do so, either by returning the enclosed form or by emailing the office at the above address. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether you had complied with the Ministerial Code. Similarly, I should be grateful if you would inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change your roles with SIGMA as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to seek fresh advice.

Once the appointment have been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee’s website and include the main details of the application, together with the Advisory Committee’s advice, in the regularly updated consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report.

Lord Lang of Monkton

Sir Gerald Howarth MP