

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 July 2011

Present

Lord Lang of Monkton (Chairman)
Sir Colin Budd
Lord Dholakia
Lord Macdonald
Sir Hugh Stevenson
General The Lord Walker of Aldringham

Secretariat

Ms Geraldine Alexander (Secretary)
Mr Richard Jarvis
Ms Maggie O'Boyle (Press officer)
Mrs Navita Seedhar
Ms Beth Watson

Apologies

Dame Juliet Wheldon

Minutes of last meeting

1. The minutes of the previous meeting on 24 May 2011 were agreed.

Chairman's update

2. Lord Lang updated the Committee on an outstanding case.
3. The Chairman had replied to a letter from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards about his review of the MPs' Code of Conduct.
4. The Chairman had written to Ministers of the Scottish Government who left office following the election on 5 May, to draw their attention to the business appointment rules. It was confirmed that applications from Scottish Cabinet Ministers would be approached in the same way as UK Government Cabinet Ministers' applications.
5. It was agreed that the Committee would write to all former Ministers who left at the last General Election, to remind them that they needed to seek advice from the Committee for two years after leaving office.
6. Minutes of Committee meetings, dating back to the start of Lord Lang's Chairmanship had been published on the website. Minutes would be routinely published, once they have been agreed by the Committee.

7. Lord Lang had been interviewed for Radio 4's "File on 4" programme on the Rules and how they work.

Code of practice

8. It was agreed that the Committee would adopt the same approach to registering shareholdings as the House of Lords, and the Code of Practice would be amended accordingly. The register would be published after the summer recess.

Independent consultancies

9. The Committee agreed to maintain its current approach to independent consultancies. It would also seek to provide a definition of consultancy work, which it would publish. The secretariat was invited to draft a definition for the Committee's consideration.
10. The Committee also agreed that in the future it would publish details of commissions it has considered and advised on together with its advice on a consultancy. It would be made clear on the website and elsewhere that the Committee would not maintain an on-going list of commissions and that often only the first few commissions would be listed, unless the Committee was asked for specific advice on one.

Compliance assurance

11. The Committee considered the paper on compliance assurance and agreed to the proportionate approach set out. It invited the secretariat to proceed with implementation of the process and to report regularly on departmental compliance once the assurance regime had begun.

Communications

12. Draft biographies of members, for publication on the website, had been given to members for approval. It was agreed that the updated website would be published after recess, at the same time as the annual report.
13. The Press Officer updated the Committee on recent press coverage.

Freedom of Information

14. The secretariat updated the members on recent FOI requests.

Any other business

15. Future meeting dates were confirmed as 18 October and 7 December 2011.

Committee Secretariat
July 2011