

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21 October 2015**

#### **Present**

Baroness Browning (Chair)  
Mark Addison  
Sir Alex Allan  
Lord German  
Mary Jo Jacobi  
Terence Jagger  
Baroness Liddell  
John Wood

#### Secretariat

Ekpe Attah  
Catherine Millington  
Alex Newton  
Maggie O'Boyle  
Clare Salters  
Alex Young

#### **Apologies and introductions**

1. There were no apologies.
2. The Chair introduced two new members of the secretariat, Alex Newton and Alex Young, both graduate interns who would be with the secretariat until the end of the year.

#### **Chair's Update**

3. The Chair and Terence Jagger had met the Ministry of Defence's senior appointments panel in June. It had been a useful discussion and MoD was clearly highly attuned to business appointments issues. The Chair had also met the departing Permanent Secretary at the FCO, Sir Simon Fraser. Again, the FCO was a department that saw some of the highest numbers of business appointments applications and it had been a helpful meeting. She had now met the Permanent Secretaries at BIS, the Cabinet Office, FCO and MoD since being appointed and had asked the secretariat to identify other departments for her to visit during the remainder of the year.
4. The Committee's Annual Report for 2014/15 had been published on 26 August. The Chair thanked the Committee for its comments and suggestions on earlier drafts.
5. The Chair had had an introductory meeting with Matthew Hancock, the new Minister for the Cabinet Office, in September. She had made the point that, while maintaining its independence, the Committee would not hesitate to make

recommendations on the rules and their application based on the Committee's experience.

6. The expected increase in applications from former Ministers following the change in Government at the general election had come to pass. The Committee had dealt with 60 appointments of former Ministers in the first half of the year, compared with 19 in the first half of 2014/15.

#### **Minutes of the last meeting**

7. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 3 June, were approved.

#### **Applicants who have significant dealings with a sector**

8. In discussion, it was agreed that there was more the Committee could do to ensure it had a full picture of any dealings a former Minister or Crown servant may have had, while in public office, with a particular commercial sector. It would seek more detailed information, as a matter of course, from individuals and their former departments about past dealings of this type. While recognising the need to continue to consider each application on a case-by-case basis, the Committee's guidance to applicants should also make clearer that significant involvement with a sector would increase the likelihood of the Committee recommending a waiting period before an appointment could be taken up.

#### **The lobbying restriction**

9. The Committee felt there was scope to amend the definition of lobbying currently in the rules to cover more unambiguously the type of communication that might amount to improper influence. This would also provide greater clarity, both for individuals who were subject to the rules and existing Crown servants, on the type of contact that the ban on lobbying was intended to prevent.

#### **Individuals who do not submit applications**

10. It was agreed that when it came to the Committee's attention that individuals had not submitted business appointment applications when they should have done under the rules, in the interests of transparency it should seek to express its concerns publicly. In doing so, it would need to ensure that any data protection issues had been taken into account. It was also noted that the Committee had no reason to suspect widespread non-compliance with the rules and it would expect to publish such correspondence rarely.

#### **Communications**

11. The Press Officer, Maggie O'Boyle, updated the Committee on recent press coverage.

#### **Freedom of Information**

12. There were no new FOI requests. There was a case relating to the Committee currently with the Information Commissioner's Office for adjudication.

**Any Other Business**

13. The next Committee meeting would take place on Wednesday 9 December.

**Committee Secretariat  
October 2015**