



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: GENERAL SIR NICHOLAS (NICK) HOUGHTON GCB CBE ADC

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Sir General Nick Houghton, former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) at the Ministry of Defence (MOD). He would like to set up as an Independent Consultant.

Sir Nick was CDS between 17 July 2013 and 14 July 2016. As CDS he was the professional head of the Armed Forces. Prior to becoming CDS Sir Nick was Vice Chief of Defence staff, deputy to the CDS and joint Chief Operating Officer. Whilst Sir Nick has had no involvement in MOD business since his last day in post (July 2016), his last day in Crown service was 24 January 2017.

Sir Nick proposes to set up a private company providing strategic consulting services. He intends to offer strategic advice in what he describes as non-contentious areas that do not relate to Government policy or commercial interests. His services will focus on advising at board level on corporate leadership, operating model enhancements and geo-political risk.

When considering this application the Committee took into account the recommendations of the MOD's Countersigning Officer (the Defence Commercial Director), the MOD Business Appointments Panel and the Permanent Secretary.

The Committee noted the time that had passed since Sir Nick's last day of involvement in MOD business. However, given the seniority of Sir Nick's position as Head of the Armed Forces, the Committee considered it was appropriate to recommend a three-month waiting period from last day in Crown service, consistent with the approach it has taken to other Crown servants of equivalent standing.

Given the seniority of Sir Nick's former position in the MOD, the Committee also considered it was appropriate to apply to his consultancy a two-year ban on working within the UK

Defence market and a two year ban on advising on the terms of bids and contracts that relate to the MOD.

The Prime Minister accepted the Committee's advice that, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, Sir Nick's independent consultancy should be subject to the following conditions:

- a three-month waiting period from last day in Crown service;
- that he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service;
- for two years from his last day in post he should not work in the UK Defence market;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not undertake any work as a consultant that involves providing advice to any company or organisation on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of, a bid or contract relating directly to the work of the MOD or its trading funds;
- for two years from his last day of service he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of any of his clients or those he advises, nor make use of, directly or indirectly, his Government and/or Crown Service contacts to influence policy or secure business on behalf of his clients;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, before accepting any new commissions and or/before extending or otherwise changing the nature of any commission, he should make a case directly to the Committee to confirm that each individual commission he wished to take would be permissible under the terms of this consultancy.

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act or otherwise.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister "should not engage in communication with Government (Ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a Government decision, policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office."

I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Sir Nick takes up this work, or if it is announced that he will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). 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, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether he had complied with the rules.

Once the appointment has 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.

Yours sincerely

Catrina Marshall
Committee Secretariat