

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 24 May 2011**

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**Present**

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

Secretariat

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

Apologies

Sir Colin Budd  
Lord Macdonald of Tradeston  
Dame Juliet Wheldon

**Minutes of last meeting / Matters arising**

1. Members who were present agreed that all decisions made at this meeting were provisional and that the views of the members who could not attend were to be sought before any decision was finalised.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting on 23 March 2011 were agreed.
3. Richard Jarvis updated members on the merger of the Committee Secretariat with the secretariat of the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

**Chairman's update**

4. Lord Lang had written to the Ministers from the Welsh Assembly who left office following the election on 5 May to draw their attention to the business appointment rules. He would also shortly be writing to former Ministers of the Scottish Government.
5. Lord Lang updated the Committee on the progress of some of the cases that they had considered recently.

6. Treasury Solicitors had confirmed that any reference to the use of privileged information in the advice or recommendations made by the Committee should not be time-limited. This would be reflected in future recommendations.

### **Departmental Visits**

7. The Secretariat updated the Committee on the progress of the programme of visits to discuss the new rules with HR practitioners and Permanent Secretaries' Offices.

### **Freedom of Information**

8. The Committee discussed the Secretariat's briefing paper on the handling of FOI requests and the routine publication of information on the website. It was confirmed that minutes of the Committee meetings from 2009 onwards would be published shortly.

### **Communications strategy**

9. The Committee agreed the Secretariat's proposals to update the website. The Secretariat was invited to begin work straight away, with the aim of producing a mock-up for the next meeting. The Secretariat was asked to report at the next meeting on the number of hits the website receives.
10. It was agreed that in the future all cases would be sent out to members by email unless classified 'Restricted' or above, or where members had instructed the Secretariat otherwise.

### **Policy Discussion - Lobbying and Speaking Engagements**

11. The Committee agreed its approach to the imposition of the two year lobbying ban would remain and that recommendations would continue to be made on a case-by-case basis.
12. The Committee agreed that, as the current published guidance states, where individuals wished to sign up with a speakers' agency or wished to carry out a series of speeches for a particular organisation, they would need to seek permission/advice from the Committee.

### **Code of Practice**

13. The Committee considered the Secretariat's paper. It agreed that there was merit in adopting a similar approach to that of the House of Lords and it invited the Secretariat to explore how this would operate in practice.

### **Communications**

14. The Press Officer updated the Committee on recent press coverage.

**Any other business / Outstanding Cases**

15. The Committee agreed that the Secretariat should draft a response to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards' letter of 19 May asking for comments on proposed changes to the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament.

**Date of next meeting**

16. The next meeting will be held on 13 July.

Committee Secretariat  
May 2011