

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 October 2012

Present

Lord Lang of Monkton (Chairman)
Mr Mark Addison
Sir Colin Budd
Lord Dholakia
Ms Mary Jo Jacobi
Lord Macdonald
Lord Walker

Secretariat

Mr Ekpe Attah (Secretary)
Ms Rajvinder Bahia
Ms Maggie O'Boyle
Ms Beth Watson

Apologies

1. There were apologies from Sir Hugh Stevenson.

Minutes of last meeting

2. The minutes of the previous meeting on 27 June 2012 were agreed.

Chairman's update

3. The Chairman introduced Rajvinder Bahia to the Committee, who had taken up her post on 17 September as Katie Cross's replacement.
4. The Chairman updated the Committee on the outcome of the sub-committee on 5 September, which had convened to meet an applicant and give further consideration to another application. He also informed the Committee of his decision in two other cases where he had not felt it necessary to involve the Committee.

Response to the PASC report and triennial review update

5. The Cabinet Office had held initial discussions with the secretariat on the Government's possible response to PASC. The next steps would be for Cabinet Office to discuss the outline of the response with Permanent Secretaries then to circulate a draft to departments, copied to the Committee.
6. The Cabinet Office still anticipated commencing the triennial review early in 2013. Using the review of the Committee on Standards in Public Life as a benchmark, it was anticipated the review of the Advisory Committee would last approximately two months.
7. The Committee agreed to invite Sue Gray, Head of Propriety and Ethics at the Cabinet Office, to its next meeting to discuss both issues.

Compliance update

8. The Committee noted the paper on the informal compliance assurance process, and asked to be updated again at its next meeting.

Annual report

9. The Committee noted the working draft of the annual report and agreed to provide further comments to the secretariat by the end of October.

Consideration of how the BARs are functioning

10. During a discussion of the paper on how the Rules are functioning, the Committee agreed that it would retain its current approach to the lobbying ban. That was, the presumption would be in favour of a two year lobbying ban for SCS3 and above, as this approach provided clarity (although the ban could be waived or reduced depending on individual circumstances). It was also agreed that the Committee's published advice currently went into the right amount of detail as to what activities constituted lobbying.
11. Where there was an apparent conflict in the information provided by an applicant and his or her department, the Committee would need to make further inquiries to satisfy itself that it had sufficient information to provide its advice, and reflect its considerations in its published advice.

Communications

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

Freedom of Information

13. There were no recent FOI cases to report.

Any other business

14. The next meeting would be on Wednesday 5 December at 2.30pm at 1 Horse Guards Road.

Committee Secretariat
October 2012