

From the Chairman



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

G/7 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://acoba.independent.gov.uk>

You asked for the Committee's advice about accepting an offer of part-time employment as Non-Executive Chairman of First Milk, having left Government in September 2012.

When considering your application, the Committee took into account the fact that you had official dealings with First Milk whilst in office, but that these were mainly through their attendance at the Dairy Supply Chain Forum, which you chaired. The Committee noted that representatives from several competitors of First Milk were also present at this Forum, and that any information discussed at these meetings was equally available to other attendees, and would not have been commercially sensitive.

The Committee noted that you are not aware of any contractual relationship between your prospective employer and your former Department, that you had no access to commercially sensitive information about competitors, and that it is now 11 months since you left ministerial office.

The Committee considered your ministerial involvement with the UK dairy sector, including in the development of the dairy contract voluntary code of practice, but noted that your relationship and interactions with First Milk had been no different to with other dairy organisations.

Furthermore, the Committee considered your former Department's view that, subject to a lobbying ban, your proposed employment raised no concerns.

The Committee noted with concern that, due to a leak, your appointment was announced before it could provide its advice. However, taking into account all the circumstances, the Committee is content to approve the appointment, subject to the following conditions:

- that you should not draw on any privileged information available to you as a Minister; and

- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of your new employer or its clients.

It might be helpful if I add that lobbying is defined in the Business Appointment Rules in the following way – “Lobbying in this context means that the former Minister should not engage in communication with Government – including Ministers, special advisers and officials – with a view to influencing a Government decision or policy in relation to their own interests, or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted”

I should be grateful if you would inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change your role with First Milk as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to seek fresh advice.

As the appointment has already been publicly announced, 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 consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report.

Lord Lang of Monkton

Rt Hon Sir James Paice MP