

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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You asked for the Committee's advice about accepting a part time appointment as a non-executive director of Leo Group Ltd, a recycling and waste management company.

The Committee noted that you were Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) between 2010 and 2015 and are currently carrying out two unpaid roles on behalf of the Government as Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust issues and UK Government Anti-Corruption Champion.

The Committee noted that this is a paid position, amounting to 15 days' work per year.

In considering your application the Committee took into account that you are looking to take up an appointment in a sector that did not fall within your Ministerial remit at DCLG and has no link to your current Governmental roles. You have said that you were not aware of the existence of the company while you were a Minister, had no dealings with competitors of Leo Group Ltd in your last two years in office and had no access to commercially sensitive information about any competitors. The appointment is not likely to include any contact or dealings with DCLG or with government more generally.

The Committee sought the opinion of your former department, which did not have any concerns regarding the propriety of this appointment.

Taking into account the specific facts in this case, the Committee sees no reason why you should not take up the appointment, subject to the following conditions:

- That you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the organisation to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you

as a Minister or in any capacity in which you continue to represent the UK Government;

- For two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of Leo Group Ltd, its subsidiaries or its clients; and
- You should make it clear in any activities you undertake on behalf of Leo Group Ltd, its subsidiaries or clients that you are acting as their representative and not as a Government representative.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that former Ministers should not engage in communication with Government – including Ministers, special advisers and officials – with a view to influencing a Government decision or policy [including applications for awards or grants] 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 as soon as you take up the appointment, or if it is announced that you will do so, either by returning the enclosed form or by emailing the office at the above address. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments that have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether you had complied with the Ministerial Code. Similarly, I should be grateful if you would inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change your role with Leo Group Ltd, as depending on the circumstances, it might be necessary for you to seek fresh advice.

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 applications, together with the Advisory Committee's advice, in the regularly updated consolidated list on our website and in the next annual report.

Baroness Browning

Rt Hon Sir Eric Pickles MP