

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 role as non-executive director of White Capstan Limited.

White Capstan Limited is the holding company for Bolta Werke GmbH, a car component manufacturing company located in Bavaria, Germany. The company is the leading manufacturer of plated parts for the automotive industry, supplying Mercedes and the VW Group. It has no production facilities in the UK. You have declined a salary and requested that the company make a donation to charities, in lieu.

When considering your application the Committee took into account that the role will not require any engagement with the UK government. It also took into account that you will have met a wide range of automotive original equipment manufacturers and supplier companies, both through the Auto Council and individually. However, given that 16 months have passed since you were Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), any information that you will have been party to is likely to be out of date.

The Committee sought the opinion of BIS's successor department, the Department for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy, 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; 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 White Capstan Limited or the companies it owns.

From the Chair

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

The Baroness Browning

Rt Hon Sir Vince Cable