



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: RICHARD BLAKEWAY

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Richard Blakeway, former Special Adviser in the Prime Minister's Office. He has sought advice on establishing an independent consultancy and accepting a commission with Willmott Residential, a subsidiary of Willmott Dixon. Mr Blakeway was a Special Adviser from April 2016 until July 2016.

When considering this application the Committee took into account that Mr Blakeway would be providing strategic advice to Willmott Residential and that he had no dealings with the firm while in office.

The Committee noted that Mr Blakeway's former department had no propriety concerns about his planned consultancy or commissions. Given the nature of his proposed commission, DCLG were also consulted and raised no concerns. The Committee also took into account the fact that he had a background and expertise in housing, and had only been a Special Adviser for a period of three months.

The Committee's advice to the Permanent Secretary is that, in accordance with the Business Appointment Rules, Mr Blakeway's independent consultancy and commission with Willmott Residential be subject to the following conditions:

- that he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the organisation to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service;
- for two years from his last day in service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of his clients or those he advises;
- for 12 months from his last day of service he should not undertake any work as a consultant which involves providing advice to any company or organisation on the terms of a bid or contract relating directly to the work of Cabinet Office; and
- once he has received approval to set up as an independent consultant, he must seek confirmation from the Committee directly that each subsequent individual commission is permissible under the terms of his consultancy before taking it up. If, after enquiry, the Committee takes the view that a commission is, or may be, outside the terms of the consultancy he will be expected to submit a fresh application.

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act, the Civil Service Code or otherwise. (As with all Special Advisers, the Committee makes this recommendation on the understanding that, if he has not already done so, Mr Blakeway must confirm in writing to your department that he recognises that he continues to be bound by the provisions of the criminal law (including the Official Secrets Act), which protect certain categories of information, and by his duty of confidentiality owed to the Crown.)

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant "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 would be grateful if you would let us know whether the Permanent Secretary is content to approve this application in line with the Committee's recommendation, and copy us into the final decision. I should also be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Mr Blakeway takes up this work as a consultant, or if it is announced that he will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). 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 Mr Blakeway complied with the rules.

Once this consultancy work has been taken up or announced we will publish this letter on the Advisory Committee's website and include the main details, together with the Committee's advice, in both the regularly updated consolidated list on the website and in the next annual report.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Millington
Committee Secretariat