



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: GARETH JONES

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Gareth Jones, former Director General in the Welsh Government. He has applied to accept a position as a Strategic Adviser for Enterprise Registry Solutions (ERS), an IT development and maintenance company, specialising in registry services.

Mr Jones was Director General for Natural Resources in the Welsh Government from March 2012 until he left Crown service in September 2015. Prior to that, from 2007-2012 he was the Registrar and Chief Executive of Companies House.

When considering the application, the Committee took into account that Mr Jones had no dealings with ERS in his last post, although he had some limited contact with them during his time as Registrar of Companies House. However, that contact was limited to broad strategic discussions about business registration as part of global and European conferences, and, as the UK registry is developed and maintained in-house, he has never been involved in awarding contracts/grants in the field or in regulatory work affecting ERS or its competitors. The Committee also noted that all of Mr Jones's dealings with the sector were in the period 2007-2012, and that it has been nearly four years since he left his role with Companies House.

The Committee took into account the views of the Welsh Government and BIS, neither of which raised any concerns about this appointment. However, given Mr Jones's prior roles, it believes that a lobbying ban covering both the Welsh and UK Governments is appropriate.

The Committee's advice to the First Minister is that it can see no reason why he should not take up this role, subject to the following conditions:

- For two years from his last day of service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the Welsh Government or UK Government on behalf of ERS or its clients; and
- He should not draw on privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service.

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.

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 First Minister is content to approve the 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 Jones takes up this role, 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 which have not been taken up or announced. This could lead to a false assumption being made about whether Mr Jones complied with the rules.

Once this appointment 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