

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Minutes of Committee meeting held on Wednesday 1 March 2017

Present

Baroness Browning (Chair)
Mark Addison
Sir Alex Allan
Lord German
Mary Jo Jacobi
Terence Jagger
Baroness Liddell
John Wood

Secretariat

Peter Lawrence
Cat Marshall
Maggie O'Boyle
Nicola Richardson

Chair's Update

1. The Chair noted that she would be continuing with her programme of meetings with Permanent Secretaries to raise awareness of the Business Appointment Rules. A meeting has been arranged with the Permanent Secretary for the Cabinet Office for later in March. Arranging a meeting with HMT is also a priority. The Chair will meet the MOD Permanent Secretary once a new HR Director is in post.
2. The Chair noted that the Government's Business Appointment Rules have been appended to the Ministerial Code (and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers) and the definition of the lobbying ban has been strengthened. The updated Rules were published by the Cabinet Office on gov.uk on 21 December 2016. This follows a recommendation made by the Committee. The clarification of the lobbying ban makes clear that lobbying is precluded, wherever it may take place.

Minutes of the last meeting

3. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 7 December 2016, were approved.

Communications

4. The Press Officer, Maggie O'Boyle, updated the Committee on recent press coverage.

Transparency

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5. The Committee discussed the approach it takes to its advice letters. It agreed to include information about its remit to improve understanding of the Committee's role and to say as much as possible about what information the Committee considers to be important in each case when formulating its advice.

Freedom of information

6. The Secretariat provided an update on FOI casework. This included a case in which the ICO's decision had been found flawed by the Tribunal and the ICO had appealed this to the Upper Tribunal. A legal view was being sought on whether ACOBA should request to join the appeal to the Upper Tribunal, as an interested party.

Any Other Business

7. The next Committee meeting would take place on Wednesday 17 May 2017.

**Committee Secretariat
May 2017**