



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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You asked for the Committee's advice about taking up role supporting the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) study on Ministry of Defence (MOD) Accommodation.

The Committee's remit

As you will be aware, it is the Committee's role to advise on any conditions that should apply to appointments or employment under the Government's Business Appointments Rules for Former Ministers (the Rules), which apply to former Ministers for two years after they leave office.

The Rules seek to counter suspicion that:

- a) the decisions and statements of a serving Minister might be influenced by the hope or expectation of future employment with a particular firm or organisation; or
- b) an employer could make improper use of official information to which a former Minister has had access; or
- c) there may be cause for concern about the appointment in some other particular respect.

When the Committee considers applications it must have in mind that Government has judged that it is in the public interest that former Ministers with experience in Government should be able to move into business or into other areas of public life, and to be able to start a new career or resume a former one. It is equally important that when a former Minister takes up a particular appointment or employment, there should be no cause for any suspicion of impropriety.

Committee's consideration¹

First, I would like to register the Committee's concern that you did not seek advice on your involvement with RUSI's study on MOD accommodation until after you had taken up the role.

¹ This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Baroness Angela Browning; Lord Michael German; Terence Jagger and John Wood. Baroness Helen Liddell recused herself from this application in line with ACOBA's published Code of Practice.

The Government's Business Appointment Rules for former Ministers specify that retrospective applications will not normally be accepted. To fulfil the remit given to it by Government, the Committee needs to be able to consider an application fully and freely before offering its advice. It is impossible to do this in a way that will command public confidence if an appointment has already been announced and/or taken up. The Committee is therefore unwilling to give retrospective advice for this appointment.

However, the Committee would like to put in the public domain that:

- You were invited to join an informal reference group for a RUSI (the independent British defence and security think tank) study on MOD Accommodation in April 2017, carried out by RUSI staff led by Dr John Louth and sponsored by Nationwide Building Society as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility Programme. This followed on from a pamphlet you wrote jointly with Dr Louth, which was published by the Centre for Social Justice in February 2017.
- The outcome of the study is likely to be published in the spring of 2018 and its purpose is to launch a major lobbying effort to persuade MOD to change its accommodation strategy.
- You said your role in the Group involves attending occasional meetings, reviewing draft text and will involve attending and assisting the launch event, which representatives of the MOD are likely to attend.
- You said this work does not involve matters of which you had direct oversight whilst in ministerial office, but you did have some knowledge of the issues and potential solutions.
- You are not being paid for your involvement in this work.

Nonetheless, the Committee would draw your attention to the normal restriction it would impose prohibiting the misuse of privileged information obtained while in public office, as it notes it is likely you will have contact with the MOD in this role. The Committee would also expect you to refrain from making use, directly or indirectly, of privileged access derived from your role as a Minister, to influence government policy or secure funding or business, on behalf of RUSI. This would include direct involvement in lobbying of the MOD on changing its accommodation strategy.

The Committee would also remind you that advice should be sought on **all** appointments, paid or unpaid, before they are taken up or announced.

We will publish this letter on the Advisory Committee's website, and include the main details in both the regularly consolidated list on the website and in the next annual report.

The Baroness Browning

Sir Julian Brazier TD