

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

G/7 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.gov.uk/acoba>

July 2016

You asked for the Committee's advice about accepting a part-time, unpaid role as non-executive Chair of HCT Group, a social enterprise bus operator.

HCT Group operates across London, Yorkshire, Humberside, the Southwest and the Channel Islands, and has a fleet of 500 vehicles. It provides a range of transport-related services including London red buses, social services transport, school transport, Park and Ride, and education and training.

The Committee sought the opinion of your former department, BIS, which did not have any concerns regarding the propriety of this appointment, as they are not aware of any relationship with HCT. The Committee noted BIS's view that any contact between HCT and Government is likely to be between the organisation and the Department for Transport, and would refer you to the terms of the lobbying restriction set out below.

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 HCT Group.

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.

From the Chair

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 HCT Group 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