



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS
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You sought the Committee's advice about taking up a role with Aquind Ltd as a Strategic Advisor.

The Committee's remit

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.

The Committee has now considered your application, as set out below.

Aquind Ltd (Aquind)

Aquind is a UK based company focused on an 'Interconnector' between the UK and France.

This is a new, subsea electricity connector between the South Coast of England and Haute Normandie in France. You describe your role as a part-time, paid, Strategic Advisor to the company - acting as a sounding board for the company's ideas and future plans/strategy of the business.

In considering these applications, the Committee took into consideration your confirmation that you had no official or contractual dealings with Aquind or their competitors whilst in office; that you had no access to commercially sensitive information; and that it will not likely involve any contact with the UK Government.

The Committee also took into account that this role has no direct correlation with your time in office as either Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for International Development (DfID), or Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government (responsible for the Northern Powerhouse).

The Permanent Secretary of DfID confirmed to the Committee that the department has no relationship with Aquind; that you did not meet with them whilst in office; and he has no concerns about you taking up this appointment. Similar information was provided by DCLG.

Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment be subject to the following conditions:

- you should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of yourself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you from your time in Government;
- for two years from your last day in Ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of Aquind Ltd or its partners.

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.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister "*should not engage in communication with Government (Ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a Government decision, policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office.*"

I should be grateful if you would inform us as soon as you take up employment with this organisation, 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 Rules and the Ministerial Code.

Please also inform us if you propose to extend or otherwise change the nature of your role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for you to make a fresh application.

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

Mr James Wharton

