

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Minutes of Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13 December 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
Sarah Parkington
Nicola Richardson

Chair's Update

1. The Chair thanked Mark Addison and Mary Jo Jacobi who would be leaving the Committee at the end of December after more than five years of service. She reported that the recent recruitment exercise for Committee members had been successful and she hoped to welcome the new members at the March 2018 Committee meeting.
2. The Chair noted that she intended to continue her programme of meetings with Permanent Secretaries to discuss the Business Appointment Rules in 2018. Arrangements were also being made to meet the new HR Director at MOD in the New Year and other members would be invited to attend.

Minutes of the last meeting

3. The Chair noted that it had been necessary to cancel the planned Committee meeting for 10 October 2017, owing to illness. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 17 May 2017, were approved.

Explaining the Committee's approach to considering applications

4. The Committee discussed whether, in line with its commitment to transparency, there is more it can do to explain its approach to considering applications for advice. It agreed that some further explanatory guidance should be developed for inclusion on the ACOBA pages of the gov.uk website.

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Approach to recusals

5. The Committee reviewed its approach to recusals under the Committee's published Code of Practice. It was agreed that members should continue to consider whether to recuse themselves from applications on a case by case basis, applying their own personal judgment. Recusals are currently recorded in the summaries of the relevant advice on the website, but it was agreed that it would be more transparent if in future this was included in the advice letter.

Freedom of information

6. The Secretariat provided an update on FOI casework.

Communications

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

Any Other Business

8. The next Committee meeting would take place on Wednesday 21 March 2018.

Committee Secretariat March 2018