



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: GENERAL SIR CHRIS DEVERELL KCB MBE

1. The Committee has been asked to consider an application from General Sir Chris Deverell, former Joint Forces Commander at the Ministry of Defence (MOD), on taking up an appointment as an External Member for the Council of Oxford University.
2. Joint Forces Command provides the supporting framework for successful operations across the three-armed services - ensuring joint capabilities like medical services, training, intelligence, information systems and cyber operations, are developed and managed. It also provides command and control for overseas defence operations. As Joint Forces Commander, General Sir Chris had responsibility for commanding and generating the joint capabilities allocated to the command and setting the framework for the joint enablers. He was Joint Forces Commander between April 2016 - May 2019. General Sir Chris's last day in post was 9 May 2019 and he left Crown service on 12 September 2019.

Appointment Details

3. General Sir Chris Deverell states that the Council of Oxford is the University's principal executive and policy making body. It is responsible for the academic policy and strategic direction of the University; for its administration; and for the management of its finances and property. He noted the Council has 4 external members, defined as "*a person who is not the resident holder of a teaching, research or administrative post in the University, or in any college, society or Permanent Private Hall*".
4. General Sir Chris stated that all members of the Council have a responsibility for ensuring that Council conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of

behaviour in public life. They must also play an appropriate part in ensuring that the business of the Council is carried out effectively, efficiently, and in a manner appropriate for the proper conduct of public business. He also said, legally, the members of Council are charity trustees and are bound by fiduciary duties. The appointment is for four years, extendable for a further four years. General Sir Chris noted that contact with the MOD or the Government more widely, may be possible, though it was unlikely to be a major part of his role.

5. General Sir Chris advised the Committee he did not meet with Oxford University; was not involved in policy development or decisions; nor involved in awarding contracts or funding to Oxford University. He further stated he did not meet with competitors of Oxford University and does not have access to sensitive information regarding competitors.
6. The MOD Business Appointments Panel considered General Sir Chris's application and confirmed the information he provided. The MOD said the conditions recommended below appropriately mitigate the risk he could be seen to use his contacts and privileged information from his time at the MOD to the unfair advantage of his new employer.
7. The MOD recommended this appointment be subject to restrictions which prevent:
 - the use of privileged information;
 - lobbying the UK Government on behalf of himself or his clients;
 - lobbying contacts developed during Crown Service in other Governments or organisations to secure business (though stated this should not preclude routine contact on matters aligned with Government policy); or
 - working on the bids and contracts related to the work of the MOD or its trading funds.
8. The MOD raised no concerns with his taking up this role given the conditions recommended.

The Committee's Consideration

9. When considering General Sir Chris's application the Committee¹ took into account General Sir Chris's proposed work does not specifically relate to his time in office. General Sir Chris was not involved in decisions affecting Oxford University, nor did he meet with Oxford University while in office. Therefore, the Committee considered the risk this appointment could be seen as a reward for decisions taken in office as low.
10. The Committee noted that General Sir Chris was not involved, or responsible for, policy decisions regarding Oxford University. However, by virtue of his role it could be perceived he might have knowledge of policy in a general sense that could be

¹ This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Johnathan Baume; Baroness Browning; Terence Jagger; Dr Susan Liautaud; Lord Larry Whitty; John Wood. Richard Thomas was unavailable.

seen to offer an unfair advantage. Therefore, the Committee would draw General Sir Chris's attention to the privileged information ban.

11. The Committee further noted that due to his seniority he will have built up a network of contacts in government and the MOD. The lobbying ban imposed below makes clear that it would be inappropriate for him to use his contacts across the UK Government or the MOD to the unfair advantage of Oxford University. The Committee also imposed a ban on advising on bids and contracts in relation to the work of the UK Government and the MOD. In relation to the lobbying ban, the Committee considered it would not be improper for General Sir Chris to have contact with the UK Government in some circumstances. Specifically, should it be required as part of his duties as an External Member of the Council of Oxford University and it is in alignment with government policy.
12. Under the Governments's Business Appointment Rules, the Secretary of State for Defence accepted the Committee's advice that General Sir Chris' application to become an External Member for the Council of Oxford University be subject to the following conditions:
 - he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to you from your time in Ministerial office;
 - for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK MOD on behalf of Oxford University (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his MOD or government contacts to influence policy, secure funding/business or otherwise unfairly benefit Oxford University (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners). This does not preclude routine contact, should it be required on matters relating to his duties as an External Member of the Council of Oxford University, and is aligned to UK Government policy; and
 - for two years from his last day in Crown service he should not undertake any work with Oxford University that involves providing advice on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of, the UK Government, UK MOD or their trading funds.
13. 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.
14. 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."

15. I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as General Sir Chris takes up this appointment, or if it is announced that he will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether he had complied with the rules.
16. I should also be grateful if you would ask that General Sir Chris informs us if he proposes to expand or otherwise change the nature of his role, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for him to make a fresh application.
17. Once General Sir Chris has taken up this appointment and/or he has announced this is the case, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website and in the relevant annual report.

Yours sincerely

Isabella Wynn
Committee Secretariat