



**OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS**  
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March 2020

### **LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR MARK POFFLEY KCB OBE**

1. The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Lieutenant General Sir Mark Poffley, former Deputy Chief of Defence Staff at the Ministry of Defence (MOD), on taking up a commission under his independent consultancy.

#### **Commission details - Boston Consulting Group (BCG)**

2. BCG is a management consulting firm which, according to its website, partners with clients from the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors in all regions to identify their highest-value opportunities, address their most critical challenges, and transform their enterprises.
3. Lt Gen Sir Mark sought advice on carrying out paid, commissioned (part-time) work with BCG, advising on the best mix of capabilities for its international clients. He noted this work would be at strategic level discussing future trends.
4. Lt Gen Sir Mark informed the Committee he had some involvement in policy decisions by way of providing advice on military capability across the Department. He also said that as a member of the investment approvals committee, either he, or his staff had dealings with defence companies to understand their products. However, he had no direct contractual dealings generally (and not with those he sought to take up commission with), nor responsibility for anyone who did.
5. The MOD Business Appointments Panel considered Lt Gen Sir Mark's application and confirmed the information he provided. The MOD stated it could be argued that as part of the investment approvals committee he was responsible for assessing capability requirements against the Department's policy, although he was not alone in that responsibility.
6. The MOD confirmed that it has a broad and varied relationship with BCG but confirmed Lt Gen Sir Mark had no authority over contractual compliance or

tender evaluations in this area. It said Lt Gen Sir Mark would have had little (if any) exposure to BCG and limited if any exposure to information that was commercially sensitive. The MOD considered any risk here is mitigated as he had no unique exposure to international requirements - which is this area this role with BCG will focus on.

7. The MOD recommended this commission be subject to restrictions in line with Lt Gen Sir Mark's independent consultancy. This included that he should be prevented interacting with UK MOD for 24 months and from being involved in advising on military capabilities in the UK Defence market activity for 12 months, to mitigate the risk of perception he could be perceived to give an unfair advantage through access to his contacts in the UK MOD or through the key role he played in setting the department's strategy on setting military capability requirements. The MOD raised no concerns with his taking up this commission.

### The Committee's Consideration

8. The Committee<sup>1</sup> considered this commission to be consistent with the terms of Lt Gen Sir Mark's independent consultancy, described as providing advisory services to international governments and other international entities on how to develop coherent military capabilities for the future.
9. BCG works with the MOD which can raise risk under the Government's Business Appointment Rules. However, the Committee considered there is no particular risk this could be considered as a reward for Lt Gen Sir Mark's time in office as Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, given he and the MOD have confirmed he had no exposure to BCG and made no decisions in respect of the MOD's relationship with BCG in office.
10. In relation to access to sensitive information from Lt Gen Sir Mark's time in office, the Committee considered the time which has passed since he left office (11 months and 14 since he was in post as Deputy Chief of Staff) significantly reduced the risk it could offer an unfair advantage to BCG. Further, the conditions imposed on this work through his consultancy adequately mitigate any remaining risk.
11. The Committee noted the inherent risks in this application associated with it a company who work with clients in government and who have worked with the MOD. Many of these risks are adequately mitigated by the conditions attached to Lt Gen Sir Mark's consultancy. These include a ban on advising on bids and contracts with the UK MOD, which is in keeping with his description of this role which will not involve any activity related to the UK. Further, these conditions make it clear that it would be improper to make use of contacts gained in office to the unfair advantage of BCG.
12. However, there may be potential risks associated with the unknown nature of BCG's clients. Specifically, should they be a company or organisation Lt Gen Sir Mark/the MOD had a commercial relationship with or where he had some influence in respect of their work whilst in post at the MOD. Therefore, the Committee considered it would be appropriate to impose an additional condition

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<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Jonathan Baume; Baroness Angela Browning; Terence Jagger; Dr Susan Liautaud; Richard Thomas; Mike Weir and John Wood. Lord Larry Whitty was unavailable.

to prevent him from advising BCG's clients where it involves working on matters he had involvement with in office.

13. The Secretary of State for Defence accepted the Committee's advice that this commission with **Boston Consulting Group** be subject to the conditions which were previously applied to his independent consultancy, (and the additional condition which follows below):
  - that he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service;
  - For two years from his last day of service he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of his clients (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners); nor should not make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in Government and/ or Crown service to influence government policy, or secure business or funding on their behalf or otherwise unfairly advantage;
  - for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying contacts he has developed during Crown service, within other Governments and organisations, for the purpose of securing business for his independent consultancy, its subsidiaries, partners or clients;
  - for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not provide advice to any company or organisation on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of, a bid or contract with, or relating directly to the work of, the MOD or its trading funds; and
  - for two years from his last day in Crown service, before accepting any commissions for his independent consultancy and or/before extending or otherwise changing the nature of his commissions, he should seek advice from the Committee. The Committee will decide whether each commission is consistent with the terms of the consultancy and consider any relevant factors under the Business Appointment Rules (including in particular the nature of any work in the UK defence sector).
14. In addition, the Committee considered this commission with **Boston Consulting Group** be subject to the following condition:
  - **for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not advise Boston Consulting or its clients on work with regard to any policy he had specific involvement or responsibility for as Deputy Chief of Defence Staff whilst at the MOD, or where he had a relationship with the company or organisation during his time as Deputy Chief of Defence Staff on behalf of the MOD.**
15. 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.
16. The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant "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."

Yours sincerely

Catriona Marshall  
**Committee Secretariat**