



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Room G/8, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

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

July 2020

BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: MR JOHN JAMES PULLINGER CB

1. The Committee has been asked to consider an application for Mr John James Pullinger CB, former UK National Statistician from July 2014 until June 2019, he was also the Head of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority. He has executive responsibility for the Office for National Statistics (ONS). He requested the Committee's advice on taking up a commission with the World Bank.
2. His last day in post and Crown Service was 30 June 2019.

The application

3. Mr Pullinger sought the Committee's advice about taking up a commission with the World Bank under his independent consultancy. The Committee has now considered this commission.

4. The website says '*The World Bank Group is one of the world's largest sources of funding and knowledge for developing countries*'. It has five institutions who aim to reducing poverty, increasing shared prosperity, and promoting sustainable development:

- IBRD - The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- IDA - The International Development Association
- IFC - The International Finance Corporation
- MIGA - The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
- ICSID - The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes

The World Bank which provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments of developing countries. IDA focuses on the world's poorest countries, while IBRD assists middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries.

5. Mr Pullinger said this work will be a short term consultancy contract to advise World Bank on data to support the next World Development Report¹. The project needs to be completed by the end of August.

¹ The World Development Report is an annual report published since 1978 by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development or World Bank. Each WDR provides in-depth analysis of a specific aspect of economic development

6. He informed the Committee that he attended meetings (2 -4 times a year) where representatives of the World Bank have been present (such as the United Nations Statistical Commission). He also confirmed: he was not involved in the development of policy; he was not involved in the award of grants; was not involved in regulatory work affecting them; did not meet with competitors of the World Bank and did not have access to sensitive information on competitors

7. The Office for National Statistics and the Cabinet Office provided their view on his application and confirmed the details provided. The Cabinet Office said it has no reservations about this appointment in light of the conditions applied under the Business Appointment Rules. The Office for National Statistics also had no concerns.

Committee's consideration

8. The Committee² considered this commission to be consistent with the description of Mr Pullinger's consultancy which he described as work comprising on:

- Short term contracts in my areas of expertise - advising on matters such as the collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of quantitative information.
- Advice might also involve matters such as leadership, strategy and governance, including via Non-executive director positions.

9. When considering this application the Committee took into account that while he attended meetings where the World Bank was present, he had no dealings in policy or funding decisions affecting the company whilst in office. As such it is not aware of any reason it might be perceived this appointment is a reward for decisions or actions taken in office.

10. Based on the information from the departments, the Committee considered the risk attached to his access to information as the National Statistician was low, especially given the time that has passed since he left office. However, the Committee would draw his attention to the conditions below which note he must not draw on privileged information (for example, as yet unannounced data and reporting he had access to).

11. There are also inherent risks attached as it may be perceived he has contacts and/or influence that might assist the company unfairly. The conditions attached to his consultancy make it clear that any use of his contacts gained in Government/Crown Service to the advantage of the company would be inappropriate.

12. The Prime Minister, under the Government's Business Appointment Rules, has accepted the Committee's advice that this commission with **the World Bank** be subject to the same conditions as his independent consultancy:

- 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 him from his time in Crown service;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government or its Arms Length Bodies on behalf of those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in the Government, Arms Length Bodies and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage those he

² This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Jonathan Baume; Dr Susan Liautaud; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Richard Thomas; Mike Weir; Lord Larry Whitty and John Wood.

advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and 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 UK Government or its Arms Length Bodies; 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.

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 could let me know when Mr Pullinger takes up this commission, or if it is announced that he is to do so. This will enable the Committee to publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

Yours sincerely

Isabella Wynn
Committee Secretariat