



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Lord Bethell of Romford, former Minister of Innovation, Department of Health and Social Care. Appointment with Sadlers Wells.

1. You approached the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointments Rules for former ministers (the Rules) seeking advice on taking up an appointment as a Member of the Development Council for Sadlers Wells. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex below.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. Under the Rules, the Committee's remit is to consider the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during time in office, alongside the information and influence a former minister may offer the Sadlers Wells.
3. The Ministerial Code sets out that ministers must abide by the Committee's advice. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment. Former ministers of the Crown, and Members of Parliament, are expected to uphold the highest standards of propriety and act in accordance with the 7 Principles of Public Life.
4. It should also be noted that in addition to the conditions imposed on this appointment under the government's Business Appointment Rules, there are separate rules in place with regard to your role as a member of the House of Lords.

The Committee's consideration

5. When considering this application, the Committee¹ took into account this role as Member of the Advisory Council is unpaid². Generally, the Committee's experience is that the risks related to unpaid roles are limited. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government by considering the real and perceived risks associated with former ministers using privileged access to contacts and information to the benefit of themselves or those they represent; and to mitigate the risks that individuals may make decisions or take action in office to in expectation of rewards, on leaving government. These risks are significantly limited in unpaid cases due to the lack of financial gain to the individual.

6. The Committee took into account that you did not meet with Sadlers Wells in your official capacity as Minister of Innovation at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Sadlers Wells had previously received government support during the Covid-19 pandemic but the Committee noted the departments' and your confirmation that you had no involvement in this decision and you made no policy or funding decisions specific to Sadlers Wells. Given the unpaid nature of this role the Committee considered the risk that you could be seen to have been offered this role as a reward for decisions made, or actions taken in office, was low.

7. The Committee noted that as the former Minister of Innovation at DHSC there is an inherent risk you could be perceived as having access to relevant government network and privileged information, which could unfairly benefit Sadlers Wells, especially as the organisation has previously received government support. However, the unpaid nature of this appointment limits the real and perceived risk of you making improper use of your contacts or information you had access to while in office for your personal benefit.

The Committee's advice

8. The Committee did not consider this appointment raises any particular proprietary concerns under the government's Business Appointment Rules. The standard conditions below, preventing you from drawing on your privileged information and using your contacts to the unfair advantage of their new employer, will sufficiently mitigate the risks in this case. The Committee would draw your attention to the below lobbying and contracts and bids ban that prevent you using the contacts you made while in government to the unfair advantage of Sadlers Wells.

9. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with the **Sadlers Wells** be subject to the following conditions:

¹ This application for advice was considered by Isabel Doverty; Sarah de Gay; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Richard Thomas; Mike Weir; Lord Larry Whitty; Jonathan Baume; Andrew Cumpsty and Dr Susan Liataud.

² By unpaid the Committee means that no remuneration of any kind is received for the role. Applicants must declare where it is agreed or anticipated they may receive remuneration or some other compensation at some stage in the future.

- 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 ministerial office;
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK government or its arms' length bodies on behalf of Sadlers Wells (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in the government and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Sadlers Wells (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); and
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office you should not undertake any work with Sadlers Wells (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) 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 or its arms' length bodies.

10. The advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to his previous role in government only; they are separate to rules administered by other bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists or the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. It is his personal responsibility to understand any other rules and regulations he may be subject to in parallel with this Committee's advice.

11. 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.

12. 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.*" This Rule is separate and not a replacement for the Rules in the House.

13. You must inform us as soon as you take up this role, or if it is announced that you will do so. 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.

14. You must 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.

15. Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

Annex - Material information

The role

1. You said Sadler's Wells Theatre is one of the world's leading dance venues, a producing house, with a number of associated artists and companies that produce original works for the theatre, and is responsible for the management of the Peacock Theatre in the West End, during times not used by the London School of Economics. Its third venue, Sadler's Wells East, is part of the East Bank project at the Olympic Park and is due to open in 2023. The website states it organises performances and workshops, films and festivals and creates '*...new and exciting ways for everyone to experience dance*'.

2. You informed the Committee that the Development Council supports Sadler's Wells in raising charitable donations to contribute to the artistic and charitable objectives of Sadlers Wells. You said your role will not involve contact with government.

Dealings in office

3. You confirmed you had had no official contact with Sadlers Wells when you were Minister of Innovation at DHSC and said you:

- did not have any involvement in any relevant policy development or decisions that would have affected Sadlers Wells;
- do not have access to sensitive information that would provide an unfair advantage;
- had no commercial or contractual responsibilities relating to the Sadlers Wells; and
- did not meet with competitors of Sadlers Wells nor have access to sensitive information regarding competitors.

Department Assessment

4. The department confirmed the details you provided and stated you did not meet Sadlers Wells in your official capacity but privately you received an invitation

on 17 May 2021 to attend James & Mellissa performance from Nigel Higgins and another invitation on 31 March 2021 for a 'zoom return' Balletboyz & Jonsi D.

5. DHSC confirmed it has no concerns regarding this application.