

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

G/7 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

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

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Lord Darren Mott OBE, former Government Whip in the House of Lords. Paid appointment with Centaur Robotics Limited

1. You sought advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointments Rules for Former Ministers (the Rules) on taking up an appointment with Centaur Robotics Limited (Centaur Robotics) as an Advisory Board Member.
2. The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. The Committee has considered the risks associated with the actions and decisions made during your time in office, alongside the information and influence a former minister may offer Centaur Robotics. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex.
3. The Committee's advice is not an endorsement of the appointment – it imposes a number of conditions to mitigate the potential risks to the government associated with the appointment under the Rules.
4. 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.

The Committee's consideration of the risks present

5. There is no known overlap with your role as a minister and Centaur Robotics' work. You did not meet with the company, nor did you make any decisions specific to it whilst in office. Therefore, the Committee¹ considered the risk that

¹ This application for advice was considered by Andrew Cumpsty; Sarah de Gay; Hedley Finn OBE; The Rt Hon Baroness Jones of Whitchurch; Dawid Konotey-Ahulu CBE DL; The Rt Hon Lord Pickles; Michael Prescott; and Michael Weir.

this appointment could reasonably be perceived as a reward for decisions made or actions taken in office to be low.

6. As a former minister, there are inherent risks associated with your access to privileged information and knowledge. However, the Cabinet Office confirmed that it did not have any concerns regarding your access to information.
7. The Committee considered there are risks associated with your influence and network of contacts in government. Centaur Robotics may have some interest in government policy beyond that of any company operating in a regulated field, as it is an entrant to and innovator in that field. You have stated clearly that the role would involve no contact with government. Rather you said that the role only involves matters related to government in so far as it is related to horizon scanning and legislative affairs. You will not be involved in any lobbying which, should it be necessary, would fall to others in the company.

The Committee's advice

8. There is no specific overlap with your time in government. Given the focus of the role on government affairs, the main risk is that you could be seen to offer Centaur Robotics unfair access to, and influence within, government. You clearly state you will not be involved in lobbying and this is not the focus of the role. The standard conditions which are set out below prevent you from doing so, including indirectly through contacts you have gained as a minister.
9. In accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises that this role with **Centaur Robotics Limited** be subject to the following conditions:
 - 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 arm's length bodies on behalf of Centaur Robotics (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 Centaur Robotics (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 Centaur Robotics (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 arm's length

bodies.

10. The advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to an individual's previous role in government only; they are separate from rules administered by other bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and the Registrar of Lords' Interests². You are reminded that as a Member of the House of Lords you are prevented from any paid lobbying under the House of Lords Code of Conduct. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to understand any other rules and regulations they may be subject to in parallel with this Committee's advice.
11. By '*privileged information*' we mean official information to which a Minister 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 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. 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.
14. 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 Eric Pickles

² All Peers and Members of Parliament are prevented from paid lobbying under the the House of Commons Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords. Advice on your obligations under the Code can be sought from the Registrar of Lords' Interests

Annex - Material Information

The role

1. Centaur Robotics is a company that has designed and made an electric mobility vehicle that is an alternative to a wheelchair.
2. You said your paid, part-time role will be as an Advisory Board Member. You will work one day per month, and be involved in board meetings and regular digital communications.
3. You said that you will advise on the following topics:
 - strategic counsel: providing insight and advice about military veteran organisations, health organisations, transportation industry and urban planning (as it relates accessible travel).
 - communications: participating in company-hosted events; providing commentary for company communication channels; meeting with key stakeholders.
 - legislative horizon scanning.
 - advising the company on navigating challenges and seizing opportunities; and on ensuring efficacy of the board, stakeholder and talent management, succession planning.
 - supporting the CEO's performance, establishing clear expectations, and delivering constructive feedback to uphold the highest standards of leadership.
4. You stated that in your role you will not have any contact with government but would instead be applying your experience from a three-decade career at a senior level to supporting the company's development. You noted that your stakeholders would include investors, potential investors, clients and potential clients - but not government. You also said that should the company need to lobby the government this would be carried out by others in the company.
5. According to the Centaur Robotics website, the Chairman, Eric Kihlstrom, co-founded the UK All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on longevity, which was disbanded in 2023.

Dealings in office

6. You advised the Committee that you did not meet with Centaur Robotics whilst in office. You said you did not have any involvement in policy, regulatory or commercial decisions that would have been specific to the company.

Departmental Assessment

7. The Cabinet Office confirmed the details you provided, confirmed that it had no any concerns regarding your access to information and recommended the role be approved subject to the standard conditions.