



**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](mailto:acoba@acoba.gov.uk)

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

**February 2024**

**BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Admiral Sir Tim Fraser KCB ADC, former Vice Chief of the Defence Staff at the Ministry of Defence. Paid appointment with Deloitte LLP.**

1. Admiral Sir Tim sought advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointments Rules for former Crown Servants (the Rules) on an appointment he wishes to take up as an Advisor for Deloitte LLP (Deloitte).

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 Admiral Sir Tim's time in office, alongside the information and influence the former Vice Chief of the Defence Staff may offer a consultancy firm. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex.

3. The Committee considered whether this appointment was unsuitable given Admiral Sir Tim's former role as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, and the focus on defence for unknown clients. The Committee must also consider the information provided by the applicant and the department. The Committee's advice is not an endorsement of the appointment - it imposes a number of conditions and a waiting period to mitigate the potential risks to the government associated with the appointment under the Rules

4. The Rules<sup>1</sup> set out that Crown servants must abide by the Committee's advice. It is an applicant's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment. Former Crown servants 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 risk presented

---

<sup>1</sup> Which apply by virtue of the Civil Service Management Code, The Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, The King's Regulations and the Diplomatic Service Code.

5. As Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Sir Tim was one of the highest ranking officers at the MOD. As a result he was a member of the Executive Committee, the Investment Approvals Committee and a number of other governance boards. Deloitte is a professional services firm that operates in the defence sector, in addition to other sectors, and has a contractual relationship with the MOD. It is significant that Admiral Sir Tim had no involvement with the MOD's contracts with Deloitte in office and there is no evidence this work was offered as a reward for decisions made, or actions taken in office. It is also relevant to the Committee's consideration that Deloitte has a commercial relationship with the MOD and he held a role in the senior leadership at the MOD and therefore held collective responsibility.

6. As the former Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Sir Tim would have had access to a wide range of privileged information regarding defence and security. Given the span of that information and his proximity to decisions at the MOD, he could offer any defence and security focussed company unfair access to information and influence.

7. The Committee<sup>2</sup> agreed with the MOD that there are a number of mitigating factors that help to reduce the risks associated with Admiral Sir Tim's access to information and the unfair insight he may be seen to offer Deloitte and its clients:

- the MOD confirmed he withdrew completely from all defence matters from his last day in the role in May 2022;
- it has been over 12 months since he has had access to information and decisions within government/the MOD. This reduces the currency of this information;
- he is prevented from drawing on privileged information and has an ongoing duty of confidentiality; and
- there is nothing specific the MOD is aware of that might offer a significant advantage to Deloitte. This is therefore a general risk associated with his wide ranging and senior role in defence.

8. Deloitte's clients are unknown. Although Admiral Sir Tim's role is internally-focused, on defence matters outside of the UK, given its focus on NATO countries, the clients he will work with are to some extent, known. However there remains a risk he may be asked to advise on matters that relate to clients affected by matters he had direct involvement or responsibility for; or where he had a relationship with the client whilst in Crown service.

9. Admiral Sir Tim will have gained contacts within the UK and internationally - including within other governments, militaries and private companies, particularly in

---

<sup>2</sup> This application for advice was considered by Andrew Cumpsty, Isabel Doverty, Sarah de Gay, the Rt Hon Lord Eric Pickles, Richard Thomas, Mike Weir, and Larry Whitty.

defence and NATO. As such, there is a risk his network and influence might be used to assist Deloitte unfairly. The Committee notes it is not his intention to have contact with the MOD in this role. There remains a significant risk it could be perceived that Admiral Sir Tim's influence, as the former Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, offers Deloitte access to the UK MOD and NATO militaries it might not otherwise have.

10. It is also relevant that Deloitte confirmed Sir Tim will not undertake any activities which conflict with ACOBA's advice.

#### The Committee's advice

11. The Committee noted the mitigating factors above that help to reduce the risks associated with Admiral Sir Tim's access to information. There is potential for Deloitte's broader defence work to overlap with his access to information and responsibilities in the UK. Whilst the Committee recognised this is not Admiral Sir Tim's intention, the Committee has imposed a condition which prevents him from working in the UK defence sector, and on matters he was specifically involved with in office, should it overlap with the NATO focus of his work for Deloitte. This is in keeping with the role as described.

12. Due to Admiral Sir Tim's influence in the defence industry and his network outside the UK, the Committee has also advised that he must not make use of this privileged network to secure business for Deloitte. He has confirmed there will be no lobbying of the government in this role, in line with the expectations set out in the Rules. However, there is a risk he could be seen to be offering Deloitte unfair access and influence. Alongside this and the commercial relationship that exists with Deloitte, the Committee's advice is there should be an appropriate gap between his leaving office and taking up this role. It was considered the 12 months has now passed since he last had access to information and decision making in office is sufficient.

13. Also in keeping with the details of the role he described in his application, there is a condition imposed to prevent him having direct engagement with the MOD on behalf of Deloitte; as well as conditions that prevent him making use of contacts gained in other governments and organisations to gain business. These are alongside the standard conditions which prevent him from making use of privileged information and being involved in bids and contracts with the UK MOD.

14. The Committee advises, under the government's Business Appointment Rules, that Admiral Sir Tim's role with **Deloitte LLP** should be subject to the following conditions:

- a waiting period of 12 months;
- 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 advise on the UK defence market;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK government or any of its arm's length bodies on behalf of Deloitte LLP (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his contacts in government and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Deloitte LLP (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients);
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not advise Deloitte LLP (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) on work with regard to any operational, policy or operational matter he had specific involvement or responsibility for, or where he had a relationship with the company or organisation during his time as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service he should not have any contact or engagement on behalf of Deloitte LLP (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) with the MOD;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not provide advice to LLP (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) 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 any of its arm's length bodies - including the MOD or its trading funds; and
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying contacts he has developed during his time in office and in foreign governments and organisations (including NATO and its allied nations' governments and/or militaries) for the purpose of securing business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Deloitte LLP(including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners).

15. The advice and the conditions under the government's Business Appointment Rules relate to your 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' Interests<sup>3</sup>. 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.

---

<sup>3</sup> All Peers and Members of Parliament are prevented from paid lobbying under the House of Commons Code of Conduct and the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords. Advice on obligations under the Code can be sought from the Parliamentary Commissioners for Standards, in the case of MPs, or the Registrar of Lords' Interests, in the case of peers.

16. 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 Ministerial Code/Civil Service Code or otherwise.

17. 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.*"

18. Vice Admiral Sir Tim must inform us as soon as he takes up this work or if it is announced that he will do so. Similarly, he must inform us if he proposes to extend or otherwise change his role with the organisation as depending on the circumstances, it might be necessary for him to seek fresh advice.

19. Once this appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website.

Yours sincerely,

Cat Marshall  
**Committee Secretariat**

## **Annex - material information**

### The Role

1. Deloitte provides professional services: audit, consulting, financial advisory, risk advisory, tax, and legal services internationally. It works across all sectors, including government. Services include: driving large-scale, complex transformation programmes; supporting innovative delivery models, digital transformation and leadership and talent development; and specialist financial and commercial advice on major procurements and complex transactions. It works with government, including the MOD, from designing and launching pilot programmes testing new accommodation models to payroll integration services.
2. Admiral Sir Tim seeks to join in a paid part time capacity as an Advisor. He said he will be focussed primarily on providing advice to support a team looking at the export market, with an emphasis on international defence (NATO) markets. It will be internally focussed helping shape business strategy, advising on specific market opportunities and the mentoring and support to career development of the delivery teams. He described his role overall as providing a broader understanding for the export market and internal team building to enhance capability.
3. Deloitte confirmed Sir Tim will not undertake any activities which conflict with ACOBA's advice.

### Dealings in office

4. Sir Tim stated that the only contact he had with Deloitte was its involvement in the transition when he took over as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff. The company enabled a discussion in preparation for his taking up the role. This was not commercially-focused. He had no dealings with competitors of Deloitte.
5. In relation to NATO he said he visited UK troops in NATO once or twice a year, with personnel focus to see how troops were getting on - for example in relation to accommodation. He noted he had also had some high level contact with senior leaders within NATO for broad discussion on Ukraine.
6. Admiral Sir Tim said he did not consider he would offer any particular insight over and above knowledge and experience of defence more generally. He notes his role was not related to decisions or the administration of any departmental policy involving Deloitte.

### Departmental view

7. The MOD confirmed the details provided by Admiral Sir Tim on his application

form, including his dealings with Deloitte and companies operating in this area of capability. Specifically it confirmed there are 20 live contracts with the MOD but he was not responsible for the delivery of any MOD programmes/ contracts/ tenders/ procurement relating to Deloitte.

8. The MOD said that as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Sir Tim *'...had influence at the highest levels of UK MOD. Suitable restrictions will need to be put in place on this appointment to mitigate the risk of perception that his proposed employer could gain undue advantage through use of such contacts. As well as to mitigate the risk that the appointment would give his proposed employer undue influence with the MOD or UK government or unfair advantage over other companies'*.

9. The MOD recommended that standard conditions be applied, alongside conditions preventing Admiral Sir Tim from advising Deloitte on specific policy for which he had responsibility as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff and making use of contacts gained in office . The MOD said that *'The proposed behavioural conditions will mitigate the risk of perception that this appointment could give his proposed employer undue access to new business opportunities by virtue of the contacts Adm Sir Tim Fraser has developed during his Crown Service. It will also mitigate the risk that this appointment would give his proposed employer undue influence with the MOD or UK Government or unfair advantage over other companies'*.