



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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The Department for Work & Pensions

Breach of the government's Business Appointment Rules: DWP application concerning the appointment of Mr Richard Corbridge with Segro plc

ACOBA has completed its consideration of the announcement of Mr Richard Corbridge's appointment with Segro plc (Segro) prior to receiving ACOBA's advice on the application submitted by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP).

Mr Corbridge applied for advice on joining Segro as its Chief Information Officer. Before ACOBA provided advice, the appointment was announced with coverage in several media outlets¹.

The government's Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) state that new appointments must not be announced, or taken up, before advice is provided. Statements in response to ACOBA have been received from Mr Corbridge and the department and are enclosed. Segro did not reply to ACOBA's letter, also enclosed.

Mr Corbridge apologised for the breach. He said that – though both Segro and DWP were aware of the need to await ACOBA's advice – Segro made the announcement before advice was received. He explained that Segro did so in order to manage potential media interest in this appointment. DWP stated that it had taken steps to ensure that correct internal approvals were in place to avoid this happening again; and added its apologies to those already submitted by Mr Corbridge.

Failure to await advice before announcing the appointment is in this case a breach of the government's Rules and the requirement set out in the Civil Service Management Code. Mr Corbridge confirmed that Segro was aware that he was subject to the Rules,

¹ www.computerweekly.com/news/366612942/DWP-CIO-Rich-Corbridge-leaving-to-join-property-developer
www.propertyweek.com/finance/segro-appoints-former-government-official-at-cio
www.egi.co.uk/news/segro-strengthens-leadership-team-with-first-cio/
benews.co.uk/segro-hires-new-chief-information-officer/
uk.marketscreener.com/quote/stock/SEGRO-PLC-4007239/news/SEGRO-Appoints-Rich-Corbridge-as-Chief-Information-Officer-48019010/

and that any announcement had to wait until the full process had been completed. Segro decided not to comply, and announced the appointment without awaiting advice. Mr Corbridge's LinkedIn profile also was subsequently updated. The Committee will not provide advice on this appointment. The Rules, seek to prevent any reasonable concern that a former Crown servant's employer may be offered unfair access to privileged information or influence within government as a result of the appointment. Owing to the failure in this case to await advice, the opportunity to manage the risks appropriately has been lost. Consequently, the government, Mr Corbridge and Segro have been left open to concerns that he may offer Segro an unfair advantage.

In line with the Committee's policy of transparency, correspondence on this matter – including Segro's failure to respond – will be published on our website. This letter will be copied to the Cabinet Office, as the owner of the Rules; ACOBA's letter to the Cabinet Office is enclosed.

Dougie Thornton
Committee Secretariat

Enclosures:

- ACOBA's letter to the Cabinet Office
- Statements in response to ACOBA from
 - Mr Corbridge
 - The Department for Work & Pensions
- ACOBA's letter to Segro