

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



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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Head of HR
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By email

January 2025

Dear Ms Murphy,

I am writing to you, in my capacity as Chair of the independent Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA).

As a former senior civil servant, Mr Corbridge made an application for advice under the government's Business Appointments Rules (the Rules) from ACOBA to join Segro Plc as Chief Information Officer. Before ACOBA had considered the application and provided advice, this appointment was announced and several relevant media outlets had covered news of his appointment¹.

I understand from Mr Corbridge and the Department for Work and Pensions that Segro was made aware of the Rules, and that any external communications would need to be approved as a result of this. Mr Corbridge told ACOBA that Segro felt it had to name him due to concerns around a leak that might impact on its business.

It is unacceptable to share details of a possible appointment where an applicant has not yet received advice.

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/

To fulfil the remit given to it by the government, ACOBA must be able to consider applications fully and freely before providing its advice – which can be that a role is unsuitable or include conditions on the employment to protect the integrity of government – such as a waiting period. It is impossible to do this in a way that will command public confidence and avoid embarrassment to the applicant, if a proposed appointment is already in the public domain.

In line with the Committee's policy of transparency, correspondence on this matter will be published on our website. If you wish to respond, please reply to this letter before 20 January 2025. Any response will be published on our website and failure to respond will be noted.

The Rt Hon The Lord Pickles