

From the Chair



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

Room G/08, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gov.uk

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

December 2024

BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Rachel Mclean, former Minister of State for Housing and Planning at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Unpaid appointment with The Conservative and Unionist Party.

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 an unpaid role with The Conservative and Unionist Party (The Conservative Party) as Director of Strategy.
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 you may offer The Conservative Party. 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 presented

5. When considering this application, the Committee¹ took into account this appointment is unpaid.² 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 joining outside organisations. Those risks include: using privileged access to contacts and information to the benefit of themselves or those they represent. The Rules also seek 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. Whilst any political party has a strong interest in government policy, party-political matters are outside the Committee's remit and it is relevant that this is a role within the same party you represented in government. There are limited risks associated with any former minister's access to information, network of contacts and influence in government in taking up such a role.

The Committee's advice

7. The Committee did not consider this appointment raises any particular concerns under the government's Business Appointment Rules. Whilst there are inherent risks associated with your access to sensitive information and contacts, the standard conditions below are sufficient to mitigate the limited risks in this case. These seek to prevent you from drawing on your privileged information and contacts to the unfair advantage of The Conservative Party.
8. Therefore, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with **The Conservative and Unionist Party** 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 arms' length bodies on behalf of The Conservative and Unionist Party (including parent companies,

¹ This application for advice was considered by Andrew Cumpsty; Isabel Doherty; Hedley Finn OBE; Sarah de Gay; Dawid Konotey-Ahulu CBE DL; The Rt Hon Lord Eric Pickles; Michael Prescott; and The Baroness Thornton. Mike Weir was unavailable.

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.

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 The Conservative and Unionist Party (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 The Conservative and Unionist Party (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.
9. 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.³ 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.
10. You must inform us as soon as you take up employment with this organisation, or if it is announced that you will do so and we will publish this letter on our website. Any failure to do so may lead to a false assumption being made about whether you had complied with the Rules.
11. You must 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.
12. Once the appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website

The Rt Hon Lord Pickles

³ 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.

Annex - Material Information

The role

1. The Conservative and Unionist Party is a political party. It is the official opposition party to the government.
2. You wish to take up a part-time, unpaid role as Director of Strategy to the Conservative Party leader. You will work under the Chief of Staff. You said your role would involve the following:
 - Supporting the Leader of the Opposition in campaigning, developing strategy and political research
 - Outreach to the Conservative Party
 - Overseeing activities of Conservative Campaign Head Quarters
 - Overseeing election campaigning plans for local elections and parliamentary by-elections
 - No contact with government

Dealings in office

3. You said that you did not make any regulatory or commercial decisions specific to The Conservative Party whilst in office.

Departmental assessment

4. MHCLG confirmed the details provided in your application and recommended the standard conditions.