

*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](mailto: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 Assiturus Ventures Ltd.**

1. You approached the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments the Committee) under the government's Business Appointments Rules for Former Ministers (the Rules) seeking advice on taking up a paid role as a Consultant with Assiturus Ventures Ltd (Assiturus).
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 Assiturus. 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. Assiturus is a management and financial services consultancy. You told the Committee<sup>1</sup> that its client base is mainly start-ups, but it does service both private and public sector clients. As a consultant, you said that your role will involve advising both the company and clients on business strategy.
6. You did not meet with, nor make any decisions specific to Assiturus while in office. Therefore, the risk that you were offered this role as a reward for decisions made or actions taken in office is low.
7. As a former minister, there are inherent risks associated with your general access to privileged information, contacts, and influence within government. The risks are limited given there is no direct overlap between your responsibilities in government and your proposed role. It is also relevant that you have been out of office for 14 months, putting a gap between your access to information and you taking up this role.
8. Your role with Assiturus is client-facing. It is unknown which clients you will represent and the matters you will advise on, which raises risks that you could be asked to advise on matters that conflict with your time in office, or where you had a relationship with the client. The Committee considered this to be limited given that your ministerial role was not focused on external stakeholder engagement, and Assiturus works with start-ups, limiting the possibility that you would have crossed over with these clients in office.

#### The Committee's advice

9. The Committee did not consider this appointment raises any particular concerns under the government's Rules, provided it is subject to the conditions below. These make it clear that you cannot make use of your access to privileged information, contacts or influence gained from your time in ministerial office to the unfair benefit of Assiturus.
10. To address the limited risks Assiturus' unknown clients may overlap with your responsibilities in office, the Committee has imposed an additional condition as standard in such cases. This prevents you from working on matters directly overlapping with your material responsibilities in office, or where you had a material relationship with the client.

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



11. Taking into account these factors, in accordance with the government's Business Appointment Rules, the Committee advises this appointment with **Assiturus Ventures Ltd** 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 Assiturus Ventures Ltd (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in the government and/or ministerial office to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Assiturus Ventures Ltd (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients);
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office you should not undertake any work with Assiturus Ventures Ltd (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; and
- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not advise Assiturus Ventures Ltd or its clients on any work with regard to any policy you had material involvement in/responsibility for as a Government Whip in the House of Lords, or where you had a relationship with the relevant client during your time in government.

12. 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>2</sup> 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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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 Parliamentary Commissioners for Standards, in the case of MPs, or the Registrar of Lords' Interests, in the case of peers.



13. 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 or otherwise.
14. The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that you "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".
15. You must inform us as soon as you take up employment with this organisation(s), or if it is announced that you will do so. Please 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.
16. Once the appointment(s) 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 Pickles**



## **Annex - Material Information**

### The role

1. Assiturus Ventures is a management and financial services consultancy, set up in April 2024. It services both public and private sector clients, but you said that the majority of clients at present are start-ups; and that Assiturus advises on how to seek funding and scale-up.
2. In your paid, part-time role as a Consultant, you said that your role would be as a strategic business advisor - advising on the strategic direction of the companies that the firm services. You said that it will mainly be internal, but also client-facing. You confirmed your role will not involve contact with government.

### Dealings in office

3. You advised the Committee that you did not meet with, or make any decisions that impacted, Assiturus in office. Assiturus was set up several months after you left ministerial office.

### Departmental Assessment

4. The Cabinet Office confirmed the details you provided and recommended the standard conditions.