



**OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS**

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**BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Mr Guy Opperman, former Minister for Roads and Local Transport at the Department for Transport, and previously Minister for Employment at the Department for Work and Pensions. Paid appointment with Sustainable Times Ltd.**

1. You approached the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (the Committee) under the government's Business Appointment Rules for Former Ministers (the Rules) seeking advice on taking up a paid appointment as an Advisor with Sustainable Times Ltd (Sustainable Times).
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 taken during your time in office, alongside the information and influence you may offer Sustainable Times as a former minister. The material information taken into consideration by the Committee is set out in the annex below.
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. Sustainable Times is a media platform and community that delivers resources and news on the sustainability landscape for business.

6. The Department for Transport (DfT) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) confirmed that you did not meet with Sustainable Times, nor were you involved in policy, regulatory or commercial decisions specific to the organisation. Therefore, the Committee<sup>1</sup> considered the risk that this appointment could reasonably be perceived as a reward for decisions or actions taken in office is low.
7. As a former minister, it is likely that you had access to a broad range of sensitive information that may provide any company an unfair advantage, including Sustainable Times. The risks are limited as there is no direct overlap with your time in office and the work of the organisation. Further, DfT and DWP do not consider you to possess sensitive information that could provide an unfair advantage to Sustainable Times. This is a general risk and you have been out of office for over 12 months – putting a gap between you last having had access to information and taking up this role.
8. As with any former minister, there are risks associated with your contacts and influence within government – with the potential for Sustainable Times to gain unfair access or influence as a result. You confirmed your role excludes any dealings with the UK government, reducing the risk you could be perceived to be lobbying government – which all former ministers are prevented from doing for two years after leaving office.

#### The Committee's advice

9. The Committee determined the risks identified in this application can be appropriately mitigated by the conditions below. These make it clear that you cannot make use of privileged information, contacts or influence gained from your time in ministerial office to the unfair advantage of Sustainable Times.
10. The Committee advises, under the government's Business Appointment Rules, that your appointment with **Sustainable Times 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 government or any of its arm's

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<sup>1</sup> This application for advice was considered by Isabel Doverty; Hedley Finn OBE; Sarah de Gay; Dawid Konotey-Ahulu CBE DL; Michael Prescott; and The Baroness Thornton.

length bodies on behalf of Sustainable Times Ltd (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); nor should you make use, directly or indirectly, of your contacts in government and/or Crown service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage Sustainable Times Ltd (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients); and

- for two years from your last day in ministerial office, you should not provide advice to Sustainable Times Ltd (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) 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 and its arm's length bodies.

11. 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> 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.

12. 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.

13. 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'*.

14. You must inform us as soon as you take up employment with this organisation, or if it is announced that you will do so. You must also 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.

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<sup>2</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.

15. Once the appointment 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.

Isabel Doherty

**Interim Chair  
ACOB**

## **Annex - material information**

### The role

1. Sustainable Times is a subsidiary of Sustainable Media Group. You stated that Sustainable Media Group provides information on sustainable investment via its publication Sustainable Times, established in 2025. According to Sustainable Times, it is a platform and community delivering resources and news to provide knowledge and connections needed to navigate the sustainability landscape, to facilitate building a sustainable business future. The publication is an online periodical aimed at climate change investors, and discusses global challenges (e.g. climate change, resource scarcity, social inequality) and engages sustainable founders and investors.
2. You stated that Sustainable Times asks for contributors and has a board which reviews contributions. You stated that you will be chairing this board in your paid, part-time role as Advisor to the Editorial Board.
3. You confirmed your role will not involve contact with the UK government.
4. You stated that you were approached directly by Stuart Hall, the Managing Director of Sustainable Times. You also stated that prior to becoming a Member of Parliament in 2010, you wrote over 150 articles for various magazines, newspapers and other publications, and have been an assessor or contributing editor to such publications before.

### Dealings in office

5. You confirmed that you did not have involvement in any policy, commercial or regulatory decisions specific to Sustainable Times nor, have access to sensitive information that may provide the publication an unfair advantage.

### Departmental assessment

6. The DfT and DWP provided their views on your proposed appointment.
7. The departments confirmed that you did not meet with Sustainable Times, nor were you involved in policy, regulatory or commercial decisions specific to the publication during your recent ministerial roles.
8. The DWP stated that as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Pensions and Financial Inclusion at DWP (a role you held over 2 years ago), you were highly active in the climate change field, which relates to Sustainable Times' climate brief and the sector in which it operates. However, the department stated

that you made no decisions that directly affected the company and that the risk of providing commercial/competitive advantage was low.

9. The departments did not have concerns with your proposed appointment and recommended the standard conditions apply.