

OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

G/8 Ground Floor, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ
Telephone: 020 7271 0839

Email: acoba@acoba.gsi.gov.uk
Website: http://acoba.independent.gov.uk

10 February 2015



Dear Mike,

Application to accept an outside appointment: Mr Peter Unwin CB

The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments has been asked to consider an application from Mr Peter Unwin CB, the Director General for the Policy Delivery Group at the Department for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). He will have been in his present role from April 2012 until 5 April 2015, which will be his last day of Crown service.

Mr Unwin is seeking approval to take up employment as a part-time paid CEO of the Whitehall & Industry Group (WIG), an independent charity whose purpose is to build understanding, co-operation and engagement between Government, business and the not-for-profit sectors. Mr Unwin's role will involve developing and delivering WIG's charitable strategy with the Board, leading the organisation's staff, overseeing its operational management, representing the organisation externally and managing relations with members.

The Committee noted that this appointment is likely to involve contact or dealings with his former Department as WIG's membership organisations comprises of Government departments and bodies; DEFRA is also a corporate member. This may entail engagement with Government to ask for their assistance at WIG events.

The Committee took into account that he has not personally had any direct contractual dealings with WIG during his last two years in office or any significant dealings before then, nor has he been responsible for people who have had contractual dealings with WIG. The Committee also took into account Mr Unwin's Department does not have any reservations

about him taking up this appointment. The Prime Minister accepted the Committee's advice that this application be approved subject to the following conditions:

- for two years from his last day of service he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of his new employer; and
- he should not draw on privileged information available to him as a Crown servant.

The Committee further noted that the lobbying ban would not apply to communications with Government on matters that are an integral part of the normal course of business for the organization concerned. This should help dispel any perception that Mr Unwin's role would be to lobby Government in a way that is incompatible with WIG's charitable objectives.

The Business Appointment Rules define lobbying in the following way: "Lobbying in this context means that the former civil servant should not engage in communication with Government - including Ministers, special advisers and officials - with a view to influencing a Government decision or policy in relation to their own interests, or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted". However, bearing in mind WIG's role, the Committee noted that the lobbying ban need not prevent communications with Government on matters that are an integral part of the normal course of business for the organisation concerned.

I should be grateful if you could let us know when Mr Unwin takes up this appointment, or when it is announced that he will do so (I enclose a form for this purpose). We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether he had complied with the rules.

Once the appointment has been taken up or announced, we will publish this letter on the Advisory Committee's website and include the main details of the appointment, together with the Committee's advice and the date on which he took it up, in both the regularly updated consolidated list on the website and in the next annual report.

Finally, I should be grateful if you would ask that Mr Unwin informs us if he proposes to change his role with WIG because, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for him to make a fresh application.

Baljit Rayit
Committee Secretariat