

Lord Pickles recommended to chair the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Michael Gove, has today (Friday 06 March) announced that Lord (Eric) Pickles is the government's preferred candidate for Chair of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA).

Lord Pickles has forty years of experience working in public life. He was formerly the Conservative MP for Brentwood and Ongar and Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, before being made a peer in 2018.

Whilst Secretary of State, he oversaw the establishment of a new ethical regime in local government, including taking steps to stop commercial lobbying by councillors of their own council. His department also ended the then common practice of government bodies hiring lobbyists to lobby government, and became the first Whitehall department to advertise all its jobs online to open up recruitment.

He is currently the government's special envoy for post-Holocaust issues and co-Chair of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

Lord Pickles will now attend a pre-appointment hearing with the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC).

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Michael Gove, said:

With over forty years dedicated to public service, Lord Pickles will be a superb chair of ACOBA. He has the insight and integrity to make the business appointments process work fairly, sensibly and transparently.

I would also like to thank Baroness Browning, who has held the post of ACOBA Chair since 2014 and will step down at the end of March.

Lord Pickles said:

I look forward to discussing with the Select Committee how I hope to tackle concerns about "revolving doors" and lobbying, whilst balancing the benefits of attracting talent from the voluntary sector and private sector into the Civil Service.

The chair is appointed for a five year non-renewable term and leads the

committee which independently advises the government, former ministers, senior civil servants and other Crown servants on the rules around taking employment after leaving their roles.

The recommendation follows a fair and open recruitment exercise carried out in line with the principles of the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies, published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.