



**Rt Hon Lord Pickles,
Office of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments
G/o8. Ground Floor
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ**

16 Feb 2021

Dear Lord Pickles,

Thank you for your letter of 12 Feb 2021 - and in particular for clarifying a genuine misunderstanding on my part that the ACOBA process is concerned solely with commercial work which might relate to an ex Minister's previous Ministerial portfolio (in my case at the Department for Transport).

This was a genuine mis-understanding on my part from reading the Ministerial Code and the ACOBA guidance.

I now understand that former Ministers need to seek your approval for ANY commercial employment or appointment - regardless of whether it may be linked to my previous Ministerial role - and that this included my work on various not-for-profit regeneration projects like The Norfolk Way, Norfolk Enterprise Festival, The Bridge of Hope, the mutual patient-owned blood cancer project and work on rural Regeneration through The Big Tent Foundation LTD.

Following your previous letter, I immediately froze those projects and I am working closely with your officials to go through each to establish the correct procedure and how best to proceed.

As my former officials will testify, I have always taken compliance with the Ministerial code of the utmost importance.

Please accept my apology for a genuine misunderstanding, and my thanks for your and ACOBA officials' guidance.

Yours,

George Freeman MP
Member of Parliament for Mid Norfolk

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