

Cabinet Office

10 February 2026

Application to establish an independent consultancy under the Business Appointment Rules from Sir Matthew Rycroft KCMG CBE, former Permanent Secretary at the Home Office.

Thank you for submitting an application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) to the Civil Service Commission (the Commission) on behalf of **Sir Matthew Rycroft KCMG CBE**, formerly Permanent Secretary of the Home Office. The application is to establish an **independent consultancy** and to also take on a proposed commission with the **Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI)**. Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Sir Matthew is a civil servant at SCS Pay Band 4. His last day of service was 28 March 2025.

The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. They aim to avoid any reasonable concerns that: a civil servant may be influenced in their official duties by the risk of reward; a civil servant may improperly exploit access to information; and an organisation may gain an improper influence through the employment of a civil servant.

The Commission's advice¹ is that this application to form an independent consultancy should be subject to the following conditions:

1. Privileged information – Sir Matthew should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in office.
2. Lobbying – For two years from his last day in office, until 28 March 2027, Sir Matthew should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients). He should also not use, directly or indirectly, his contacts in the government and/or civil service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).

¹ See [Advice under the Business Appointment Rules](#) for details applying to all advice issued by the Civil Service Commission.

3. Bids and contracts – For two years from his last day in the civil service, until 28 March 2027, Sir Matthew should not provide advice to any company or organisation on behalf of his independent consultancy on a bid or contract relating to the UK government or its arm's length bodies.
4. Independent consultancy – For two years from his last day in civil service, until 28 March 2027, before accepting any work for his independent consultancy and/or before extending or otherwise changing the nature of his work, he should seek advice from the Commission. The Commission will decide whether each piece of work is consistent with the terms of the consultancy and consider any relevant factors under the Rules. This excludes work that falls into the following categories: unpaid roles; non-executive charitable roles; academic roles (such as teaching, research or peer review); journalism and media appearances (excluding corporate or management roles in media organisations); or one-off speaking engagements. In these cases, the other conditions outlined in this letter will still apply.

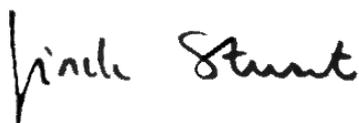
Sir Matthew's commission with the TBI should be subject to all the conditions listed above as well as the following additional condition:

5. Limitation to the role – For two years from his last day in civil service, until 28 March 2027, Sir Matthew is prevented from advising the TBI or its clients on work regarding any policy or operational matter that he had a material role in developing or determining, or where he had a material relationship with the relevant client, during his time as Permanent Secretary at the Home Office.

The Rules set out that civil servants must abide by the Commission's advice. It is Sir Matthew's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment and to understand any other rules and regulations he may be subject to in parallel with the Commission's advice.

Sir Matthew must seek advice if he proposes to extend or otherwise change his consultancy work or the scope of his commission with the TBI changes. Once this appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, the letter will be published on the Civil Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely,



Gisela Stuart
First Civil Service Commissioner
Annex A: The application

Applicant assessment

1. Sir Matthew stated that he will be setting up his own consulting service. He said the consulting work will focus on providing advisory work on a range of topics. These include foreign affairs, geopolitics, risk, government relations, organisational design and leadership. He stated his consulting work will not involve contact with, or lobbying of, the UK Government.
2. Sir Matthew stated that the skills and knowledge offered by his independent consultancy comes from his extensive experience in government earned before his recent role as Permanent Secretary, including roles in the Department for International Development and the Foreign, Commonwealth Office².
3. As Permanent Secretary of the Home Office, Sir Matthew's role involved overall oversight of the department's functions in national security and public safety functions including policing, counter-terrorism, immigration, and passports. He also served as Principal Accounting Officer, the principal adviser to the Home Secretary, and reported to Parliament on the department's performance.
4. Sir Matthew also informed the Commission of his proposed client the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI), a non-profit organisation founded and led by former UK Prime Minister, Sir Tony Blair. The TBI operates as a global advisory firm and works directly with political leaders and governments in their strategy, development, and crisis management. Sir Matthew stated he did not meet with the TBI during his time as Permanent Secretary of the Home Office, nor have involvement in policy development or decisions specific to the organisation. He added that he was not privy to sensitive information that could provide the TBI with an unfair advantage.
5. Sir Matthew's commission with the TBI stems from his continued contact with Sir Tony Blair, having previously served as his Private Secretary between 2002 and 2004.

Departmental assessment

Independent consultancy

6. The Cabinet Office and Home Office do not consider Sir Matthew to have had any involvement in decisions that would have been specific to, or provided an unfair advantage for, the establishment of his consulting business. The departments also noted that in his previous civil service roles before March

² The Foreign Commonwealth Office officially became the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on 2 September 2020, following its merger with the Department for International Development.

2020, for which he is no longer subject to the Rules, Sir Matthew had broad oversight of foreign affairs and geopolitics.

7. As Permanent Secretary of the Home Office, the departments stated Sir Matthew was privy to information on UK national security, geopolitics, and security issues. This involved his membership in the National Security Council, which oversees the Joint Intelligence Committee – the UK's interagency body for intelligence assessment and oversight of the Secret Intelligence Service, Security Service, Government Communication Headquarters, and Defence Intelligence. While he was informed on UK national security matters, the departments concluded that any risks related to sensitive information are appropriately mitigated by standard conditions preventing the use of privileged information.
8. The departments said they did not have concerns with Sir Matthew's independent consultancy establishment, provided it is subject to the standard conditions, including that Sir Matthew returns to the Commission in the taking up of any new client whilst he is subject to the Rules.

Commission with the TBI

9. The Cabinet Office and Home Office confirmed that, during his recent civil service role, Sir Matthew did not meet with the TBI and was not involved in decisions specific to the organisation. The departments acknowledged that the appointment might attract public comment due to Sir Matthew's previous role as Private Secretary to Sir Tony Blair between 2002 and 2004. However, given the significant passage of time and Sir Matthew's extensive subsequent career in the Civil Service, the departments concluded that the proposed commission with the TBI could not be perceived as a reward.
10. The departments recognised a perception risk due to Sir Matthew's knowledge of the Home Office's functions and operations. Given the broad nature of TBI's work, there is a potential for Sir Matthew to advise the TBI or its clients on matters that significantly overlap with his recent time in the civil service. In addition to the standard consultancy conditions, the departments recommended a limitation to his role - specifically preventing Sir Matthew from advising the TBI or its clients on matters he was materially involved in as Permanent Secretary of the Home Office.

CSC analysis

Independent consultancy

11. *Risk of reward.* As Sir Matthew is establishing a new company, the risk of reward in relation to his independent consultancy for decisions or actions taken in office, is likely to be low.

12. *Access to information.* Sir Matthew held privileged insight into government national security policy and Home Office departmental strategies. While there is an overlap between his former responsibilities and the proposed remit of his consultancy, the Commission considered this risk to be general rather than specific. By virtue of his seniority as Permanent Secretary, his oversight of government priorities and strategies was broad. Further, he has been out of government service for over nine months, creating a gap between his last access to information and the establishment of his consultancy.

13. Furthermore, a number of significant government announcements regarding policy decisions and security objectives have been made since he left office and have therefore reduced the currency of the information he possesses. These include:

- The 2025 Spending Review³ and the Home Office's Main Estimates Memorandum⁴, which publicly sets out the department's financial, funding and policy priorities for the next year.
- The Home Office's 2025-2026 Priorities and Structural Reforms⁵, where Sir Matthew's successor and the current Permanent Secretary of the Home Office publicly outlining the priorities and structural reforms intended for the department for the current financial year.
- The National Security Strategy 2025⁶ published by the Cabinet Office, which outlines the strategic framework for all aspects of national security and international policy facing the UK.
- The Home Office's Research, Development and Innovation Strategy 2025 to 2030⁷, which sets out the department's five year strategy and commitments on these areas.

³ The 2025 Spending Review:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2025-document/spending-review-2025-html>

⁴ The Home Office's Main Estimates Memorandum:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/48120/documents/251943/default/>

⁵ The Home Office's 2025-2026 Priorities and Structural Reforms:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/50117/documents/270334/default/>

⁶ The National Security Strategy 2025: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-strategy-2025-security-for-the-british-people-in-a-dangerous-world>

⁷ The Home Office's Research, Development and Innovation Strategy 2025 to 2030:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-research-development-and-innovation-strategy#:~:text=Our%20vision%20for%20research%2C%20development,Office%20Published%2010%20March%202025>

- The Home Office's 2030 Digital Strategy⁸, which outlines how the department will use digital, data and technology in the next five years.

The Commission therefore agrees with the departments that the risks relating to Sir Matthew's access to information to be appropriately mitigated by the standard conditions.

14. *Improper influence.* As a senior official, there is a risk that Sir Matthew's government contacts may present an unfair advantage to potential clients of his consulting work. Given the lobbying ban that applies to all former senior civil servants, Sir Matthew should not have contact with ministers or officials that could reasonably be seen as seeking to influence government. It is significant to note that Sir Matthew stated he would not have contact with government as part of his consulting work. The risks relating to lobbying and/or involvement in government bids and contracts are mitigated by the standard conditions.

15. *Independent consultancy.* This advice provides Sir Matthew consent to set up a consultancy and take up his proposed commission with the TBI, subject to a number of conditions. Before accepting any work for his independent consultancy and/or before extending or otherwise changing the nature of his work, he should seek advice from the Commission. The departments noted that Sir Matthew should return to the Commission before taking up work with any new client whilst he is subject to the Rules. However, the Commission's view is that this requirement should exclude any work that falls into the following categories: unpaid roles; non-executive charitable roles; academic roles (such as teaching, research or peer review); journalism and media appearances (excluding corporate or management roles in media organisations); or one-off speaking engagements. In these cases, the other conditions outlined in this letter will still apply.

16. *Waiting period.* As an SCS Pay Band 4 official, Sir Matthew is subject to a three month waiting period upon leaving government service in taking up any appointments. This is not applicable as it has been over nine months since he left the civil service.

Commission with the TBI

17. *Risk of reward.* Over 20 years have passed since Sir Matthew worked as Private Secretary to Tony Blair between 2002 and 2004. Given his extensive subsequent career and the departments' confirmation that he made no

⁸ The Home Office's 2030 Digital Strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-2030-digital-strategy>

decisions specific to the TBI in his recent role, the Commission agreed with the Home Office that this commission could not be perceived as a reward.

18. *Access to information and limitation to the role.* The Commission recognised the departments' concern that a perception risk exists regarding Sir Matthew's access to information, particularly given the TBI's status as a global advisory firm operating across a wide range of subject areas. The risk is most acute where the TBI's work overlaps with matters Sir Matthew was directly involved in, or where he had access to relevant sensitive information while in office. To mitigate this remaining risk, the Commission agreed with the recommendation that Sir Matthew be prevented from advising the TBI or its clients on work regarding any policy or operational matter that he had a material role in developing or determining, or where he had a material relationship with the relevant client, during his time as Permanent Secretary at the Home Office.
19. *Improper influence.* Sir Matthew's role with the TBI does not involve contact with, or lobbying of the UK government on behalf of the organisation. The Commission considered the standard conditions sufficiently mitigate the risks in relation to his initial work with the TBI.