

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

2 June 2026

Paid appointment with the University of Birmingham: Application under the Business Appointment Rules from Professor Paul Monks CB, former Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

The Civil Service Commission (the Commission) has considered an application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) from **Professor Paul Monks CB**, formerly Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). The application is for a paid, part-time role as a **Professor of Environmental Science and Policy** at the **University of Birmingham**. Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Professor Monks is a former civil servant at SCS Pay Band 3. His last day of service was 30 September 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 the appointment with the University of Birmingham should be made subject to the following conditions:

1. Privileged information – Professor Monks 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 the civil service.
2. Lobbying – For two years from his last day in the civil service, until 30 September 2027, Professor Monks should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of the University of Birmingham (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 the University of Birmingham (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 30 September 2027, Professor Monks should not provide advice to the University of Birmingham on a bid or contract relating to the UK Government or its arm's length bodies.

Professor Monks and the University of Birmingham confirmed to the Commission his intention to fully comply with the lobbying ban that applied to him, as well as their understanding of, and adherence to the remaining conditions that apply to Professor Monks' role.

The Rules set out that civil servants must abide by the Commission's advice. It is Professor Monks' 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.

Professor Monks must seek advice if he proposes to extend or otherwise change his role with the organisation. Once this appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, the letter will be published on the Civil Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. K. Owen." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kate Owen
Chief Executive

Annex A: The application

Applicant assessment

1. The University of Birmingham (the University) is a public research university.
2. As a Professor of Environmental Science and Policy, Professor Monks will undertake academic research in atmospheric and Earth Observation Science, analytical science, and breath-omics, alongside academic work on the science-policy interface. He will also teach undergraduates and postgraduates across a range of chemical, physical, and environmental science areas.
3. Professor Monks noted that he would have contact with government in his proposed role. He said he will be working on environmental policy in general, although the extent of this contact is currently unclear.
4. Professor Monks was Chief Scientific Adviser to the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), formerly the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, between October 2020 and September 2025. In this role he said he provided independent science and engineering advice for the development and delivery of policy.
5. Professor Monks stated he was not responsible for regulatory, funding or any other decisions affecting the University at any time in his last two years in the civil service.

Correspondence with the University of Birmingham

6. The University confirmed its understanding of, and adherence to the Commission's advice and the conditions imposed on Professor Monks' appointment. The University confirmed his role will not constitute lobbying.

The Commission's analysis

7. *Application level.* As a Level 1 application for an academic role, the Commission's analysis applies the principle that this category of appointment is generally recognised as posing a lower risk to government integrity.
8. *Risk of reward.* Professor Monks stated he was not responsible for regulatory, funding or any other decisions affecting the University. Therefore, the risk that the offer was made as a reward for decisions made during his time in office is low.

9. *Access to information.* As the former Chief Scientific Adviser to DESNZ, Professor Monks had access to a wide range of sensitive information, specifically for the development and delivery of energy and net zero policy. The Commission noted a clear overlap between this access and his proposed role, as he will continue to work directly on the science-policy interface in the environmental sectors. While this creates a risk that he could draw on privileged insight to benefit the University, the Commission considered the risk is mitigated by the fact that seven months have passed since his last day in post, reducing the currency of the information he holds. The standard condition regarding privileged information is sufficient to manage the remaining risk.

10. *Improper influence.* Professor Monks stated that his proposed role will involve contact with government, as he will be working on environmental policy. The Commission recognised that, given his senior profile, this creates a perceived risk of improper influence or lobbying. However, the Rules allow for communication as a routine part of a role where such activity would not be improper. The lobbying ban serves to remind Professor Monks that while he may use formal channels to discuss policy, he must not use his privileged access or senior contacts to influence policy or secure funding outside of these established routes. Furthermore, the Commission considered it significant that both Professor Monks and the University have confirmed their intention to fully comply with the lobbying ban that applies to him