

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

2 September 2026

**Paid appointment with the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance: Application under the Business Appointment Rules from Ms Harriet Mathews CMG OBE, former Director General, Africa, the Americas and Overseas Territories at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development 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 **Harriet Mathews**, former Director General, Africa, the Americas and Overseas Territories at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The application is for a paid role as Diocesan Secretary and CEO of the Board of Finance at the **Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance (CDBF)**. Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Ms Mathews is a former civil servant at SCS Pay Band 3. Her last day of service was 28 February 2026.

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 advice<sup>1</sup> is that the appointment should be subject to the following conditions:

1. Privileged information – Ms Mathews should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of herself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to her from her time in the civil service.
2. Lobbying – For two years from her last day in the civil service, until 28 February 2028, Ms Mathews should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of the CDBF (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients). She should also not use, directly or indirectly, her contacts in government and/or civil service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly

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

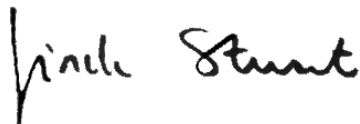
advantage the CDBF (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).

3. Bids and contracts – For two years from her last day in the civil service, until 28 February 2028, Ms Mathews should not provide advice to the CDBF (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) on a bid or contract relating to the UK Government or its arm's length bodies.

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

Ms Mathews must seek advice if she proposes to extend or otherwise change her 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, appearing to read 'Gisela Stuart'.

**Gisela Stuart**

First Civil Service Commissioner

## Annex A: The application

1. According to its website, the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance (CDBF) is a company and registered charity that manages the business and operational affairs of the diocese. This includes matters relating to finance, property, safeguarding, human resources, and the payment and housing of parish-based clergy.

### Applicant assessment

2. As the Diocesan Secretary and CEO of the Board of Finance, Ms Mathews stated that her role will be to manage operations and ensure that finances remain sustainable, properties are appropriately disposed of, and resources are available for the Church's mission. She will also serve as the secretary for the main leadership meetings of the Bishop and the diocese.
3. As Director General, Africa, the Americas and Overseas Territories at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Ms Mathews oversaw regional policy, with the overseas territories being added to her remit in February 2024.
4. Ms Mathews confirmed her role will involve day-to-day communications with a small number of specialised government bodies relevant to this specific role, notably the Charity Commission. She stated she had no official dealings with the CDBF, nor any involvement in policy development or decisions specific to the organisation, during her time in office.
5. Ms Mathews stated she applied for an openly advertised position.

### Departmental assessment

6. The FCDO stated that Ms Mathews was not involved in decisions specific to the CDBF, commercial or otherwise. The department also stated that she would not have been exposed to privileged information that could be commercially valuable to the CDBF. The FCDO said Ms Mathews did not have access to information regarding any competitors of the organisation.
7. The FCDO recommended the standard conditions.

### The Commission's analysis

8. *Risk of reward.* The FCDO confirmed that as Director General, Africa, the Americas and Overseas Territories, Ms Mathews' role was not involved in decisions specific to the CDBF. Furthermore, Ms Mathews applied for the role

via an advertised post. The risk of the appointment being a reward for decisions made in office is low.

9. *Access to information.* Ms Mathews would have had access to a wide range of information from her former role. However, the department confirmed that she would not have been exposed to privileged information that could be commercially valuable to the organisation, nor did she have access to information regarding any competitors. The standard condition regarding privileged information covers any remaining risks presented by her access to information.
10. *Improper influence.* As a former Director General, Ms Mathews would have a network of contacts in government that could provide an unfair advantage to any organisation. The Commission noted that as the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance (CDBF) is a charity, it may have administrative, statutory, and operational interactions with government bodies such as the Charity Commission, as part of its normal course of business. The Rules allow for communication as a routine part of the role where such activity would not be improper. The lobbying ban serves to remind Ms Mathews that while she may engage in routine communications required in the normal course of business, she must not use her privileged access or senior contacts to influence policy, secure funding, or obtain an improper advantage for the CDBF. The Commission considered it significant that Ms Mathews confirmed her role will not involve lobbying, and that she intends to fully comply with the lobbying ban that applies to her.