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Civil Service Commission

Cabinet Office

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**Paid appointment with The Speaking Office: Application under the Business Appointment Rules from Mr Morgan McSweeney, former Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister.**

The Civil Service Commission (the Commission) has considered an application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) from **Mr Morgan McSweeney**, formerly Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister and Political Strategy Adviser at the Cabinet Office. The application is for a paid, part-time role as a **Speaker** at **The Speaking Office Limited** (The Speaking Office). Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Mr McSweeney is a former special adviser at special adviser Pay Band 4. His last day of service was 8 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 Rules state that advice must be sought before an appointment is accepted or announced. By taking up this role without prior advice, Mr McSweeney has acted in breach of these Rules. These conditions apply with immediate effect from the date of this letter.

The Commission's advice[1] is that the appointment should be made subject to the following conditions:

1. Privileged information – Mr McSweeney 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 8 February 2028, Mr McSweeney should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of The

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

Speaking Office (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 Speaking Office (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).

3. Bids and contracts – For two years from his last day in the Civil Service, until 8 February 2028, Mr McSweeney should not provide advice to The Speaking Office on a bid or contract relating to the UK government or its arm's length bodies.

The Rules set out that special advisers must abide by the Commission's advice. It is Mr McSweeney'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.

Mr McSweeney must seek advice if he proposes to extend or otherwise change his role with the organisation. As this appointment has already been taken up, this advice letter will now be published on the Civil Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely,



**Kate Owen**
Chief Executive

## Annex A: The application

1. According to its website, The Speaking Office Limited (The Speaking Office) is a speakers bureau that matches speakers to the requirements of their corporate clients.

Applicant assessment

2. Mr McSweeney stated that The Speaking Office represents him for paid speeches, moderated conversations and related public or private events. He confirmed that the substance of his speeches draws on his general experience of elections, political strategy, leadership and government.

3. Mr McSweeney confirmed his role does not involve contact with, or lobbying of, government. He assured he declines any engagement that would require disclosure of confidential information, lobbying, government procurement work or representation of a client's interests to government.

4. As Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, Mr McSweeney advised the Prime Minister on political strategy and priorities and coordinated political advice and the work of the Prime Minister's Office. Prior to this, he served as a political strategy adviser in the Prime Minister's Office between July and October 2024.

5. Mr McSweeney stated he was not responsible for regulatory, funding or any other decisions affecting The Speaking Office at any time in his last two years in Crown service.

The Commission's analysis

6. *Retrospective application.* The Commission notes that Mr McSweeney took up this appointment before submitting an application or receiving advice. He is therefore in breach of the Rules. Mr McSweeney's representation by The Speaking Office began on 12 May 2026, with speaking engagements starting from September 2026. This role has been announced on The Speaking Office's website and he has already taken up paid work. Mr McSweeney has stated he was not aware of the Rules and, upon realising, contacted the Cabinet Office. He retrospectively submitted his application on 24 September 2026. Mr McSweeney has stated he is committed to complying with the Rules going forward.

7. *Application level.* As a Level 1 application for a speaking agency role, the Commission's analysis applies the principle that this category of appointment poses a lower risk to government integrity.

8. *Risk of reward.* Mr McSweeney had no official dealings with The Speaking Office and was not involved in policy, regulatory, or contractual decisions affecting the organisation during his time in post. The risk of the appointment being a reward for decisions made in office is therefore low.

9. *Access to information.* As Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, Mr McSweeney would have been exposed to privileged information regarding political strategy and priorities. The Commission deems it significant that Mr McSweeney has stated he declines any engagement that would require disclosure of confidential information. The standard privileged information ban mitigates any risks around his access.

10. *Improper influence.* As Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, Mr McSweeney would have a network of contacts in government that could provide an unfair advantage to The Speaking Office. He has stated there is no contact with government in his role. Any remaining risk of perception of lobbying the government is mitigated by the standard conditions.