



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Air Vice Marshal Ian Morrison CBE

1. The Committee has been asked to consider an application from Air Vice Marshal Morrison on accepting a commission with Digi2al. Air Vice Marshal Morrison was Acting Air Marshal and Director General at the Ministry of Defence, responsible for supplying defence equipment and services to Saudi Armed Forces (Defence Saudi Armed Forces Projects [MOD SAP]) from September 2012 – April 2018.

2. His last day in post was 4 April 2018, and his last day in Crown service was 15 October 2018.

Application details

3. Air Vice Marshal Morrison has sought the Committee's advice on accepting a commission with Digi2al. Air Vice Marshal Morrison will take on a role as a Consultant Non-Executive to carry out work in line with his consultancy, to provide: advisory support, focusing on corporate governance, structure, leadership, management development, along with providing advice on the design/development of strategic plans and delivery roadmaps, and business development.

4. Digi2al's website notes it was set up 6 years ago to provide digital service to clients. The website lists a number of organisations it has worked with, including: the Ministry of Defence; the Department for International Trade; and the Department for Education

5. Air Vice Marshal Morrison said he has had no dealings with relevant policy; nor was he involved in decisions regarding regulatory, grants or procurement whilst in his role as Director General Saudi Armed Forces Projects. He also confirmed that he did not have dealings (contractual or non-contractual) with Digi2al while in service.

6. The MOD Business Appointments Panel considered Air Vice Marshal Morrison's application and confirmed he did not have contact with Digi2al while in service. It also confirmed Air Vice Marshal Morrison would have access to MOD policy, plans and strategies as these relate to MOD Saudi Arabia Projects and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However it considered the risk here was low. The MOD confirmed that whilst he has some official dealings with BAE Systems in office, he had no access to detailed commercial information or pricing by virtue of his role in office. Yet due to his Senior Command and RAF service, he will have established many contacts across the MOD and wider Government. Further the MOD recognised that should he have involvement in Saudi government-facing activity relating to the Saudi British Defence Cooperation, or other matters specific to his time in office on behalf of his prospective clients, this would raise risks under the Rules and offer an unfair advantage. Overall, the MOD considered the risks in his taking up this work under his consultancy were low.

7. The MOD Business Appointments Panel recommended that Air Vice Marshal Morrison's independent consultancy be subject restrictions which prevent:

- the use of privileged information he had access to by virtue of his time in office;
- him lobbying the UK MOD on behalf of his prospective clients, in particular they note he must not engage with the MOD in relation to the Saudi British Defence Cooperation programme or the Salam project on behalf of his prospective clients;
- him from advising his prospective clients in relation to bids and contracts with the MOD;
- him from using contacts gained within the MOD and in other governments and organisations to benefit his prospective clients.

8. In addition, the MOD recommended, as is usual, that he return to the Committee for advice on each commission he wishes to take up.

The Committee's Consideration

9. The Committee¹ considered this commission to be consistent with the terms of Air Vice Marshal's consultancy, described as advising on corporate governance, structure, leadership, management development, along with providing advice on the design/development of strategic plans and delivery roadmaps, and business development.

10. The Committee noted that Air Vice Marshal Morrison had no dealings (contractual and non-contractual) with Digi2al while in service and was also not involved in commercial decisions that could have benefited Digi2al. Therefore, the Committee considered the risk this commission could reasonably be perceived as a reward for actions taken while in office was low.

11. The Committee considered that by virtue of his role as Director General Saudi Armed Forces Projects he could be seen to have access to general sensitive information regarding policy, plans and strategies especially in regards to Saudi Arabia. However, the amount of time that has passed since his last day in office reduced the risks attached.

12. The Committee also noted that due to his seniority and RAF service Air Vice Marshal Morrison will have built up a substantial network of contacts within the MOD and the UK

¹ This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Jonathan Baume; Baroness Angela Browning; Richard Thomas; Lord Larry Whitty; John Wood; and Mike Weir.

Government in general. This is particularly relevant given Digi2al are likely to want to contract with the UK Government, including the MOD, having done so in the past. The Committee would therefore draw Air Vice Marshal Morrison's attention to the conditions attached to his consultancy which prevent him from making use of contacts gained during his crown service to the unfair advantage of his clients; and the ban on his advising his clients in relation to a bid or contract with the UK Government, including the MOD.

13. The Secretary of State for Defence accepted the Committee's advice that, under the Business Appointment Rules, the commission with **Digi2al Ltd** be subject to the conditions which apply to Air Vice Marshal Morrison's independent consultancy:

- that he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in office;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK MOD on behalf of those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners); nor should he or should he make use, directly or indirectly, of his MOD or government contacts to influence policy, secure funding/business or otherwise unfairly benefit those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners);
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying contacts he has developed during Crown service, such as at BAE Systems, and in other Governments, such as that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the purpose of securing business for those he advises under his independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries and partners);
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not provide advice to any company or organisation on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of, a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of the UK Government, UK MOD, MODSAP or their trading funds;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, before accepting any commissions for his independent consultancy and or/before extending or otherwise changing the nature of his commissions, he should seek advice from the Committee. The Committee will decide whether each commission is consistent with the terms of the consultancy and consider any relevant factors under the Business Appointment Rules.

14. By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act or otherwise.

15. The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister "should not engage in communication with Government (Ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a Government decision, policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the

organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office."

16. I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Air Vice Marshal Morrison takes up this work, or if it is announced that he will do so. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether he had complied with the Rules.

17. I should also be grateful if you would ask that Air Vice Marshal Morrison informs us if he proposes to extend or otherwise change the nature of his role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for him to make a fresh application.

18. Once this commision has been publicly announced or taken up, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website, and where appropriate, refer to it in the relevant annual report.

Yours sincerely

Isabella Wynn
Committee Secretariat