

Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI)

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Last updated: 22 Jun 2026 **Status:** Influence mapping — think tank, consultancy, policy arm of Blairism

Overview

The **Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI)** is a think tank and consultancy founded by former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2017. It operates globally, advising governments on strategy, policy, and delivery — with a heavy emphasis on AI, digital identity, and "modernised" public services.

Detail	Value
Founded	2017
Type	Non-profit (company limited by guarantee)
Executive Chairman	Tony Blair
CEO	Catherine Rimmer
Location	London, UK
UK registration	10505963
Staff	786 (2024)
Operations	40+ countries
Website	institute.global

What TBI Does

TBI is not a traditional think tank — it's part policy shop, part government consultancy. It **embeds advisory teams** directly in government ministries across Africa, the Middle East, Asia-Pacific, and the Americas, focusing on:

- **Delivery units** — helping governments implement policy (the "delivery" model Blair pioneered in the UK)
- **Investment facilitation** — connecting governments with private capital
- **Public-sector digitisation** — digital ID, data platforms, AI infrastructure
- **Crisis response** — pandemic recovery, post-conflict reconstruction (including Gaza)
- **UK policy** — "Future of Britain" programme producing papers for UK policymakers on growth, tech, public-service reform

TBI presents itself as non-partisan and pro-technology. Critics describe it as a vehicle for Blair's post-premiership influence, funded by wealthy donors with a "technocratic, Third Way" agenda.

Key Policy Positions (2025-2026)

AI & Digital Identity

TBI's most prominent focus. The institute has published extensively on:

- **"Sovereignty, Security, Scale: A UK Strategy for AI Infrastructure"** (Jul 2025) — calling for major state investment in AI compute infrastructure
- **"Sovereignty in the Age of AI"** (Jan 2026) — arguing governments need to rethink AI control and digital sovereignty
- **"Digital Embassies and AI Sovereignty"** (May 2026) — proposing states establish digital embassies
- **Digital ID** — TBI has been a key advocate globally for state-run digital identity systems. Oracle founder Larry Ellison has cited TBI's role: *"Tony Blair Institute has been key in this around the world"*

Energy & Climate

- **"Why Britain Needs an Energy-Strategy Reset"** (Feb 2026) — argued the UK should reframe its 2030 clean-power mission to prioritise affordability over decarbonisation speed
- **"Europe must shift from climate-first, climate-only approach"** (May 2026) — TBI's European energy strategy paper, calling for a broader energy security framework

- **Net zero by 2050** — still endorsed, but TBI has urged a pragmatic slowdown on near-term targets
- **Criticism:** Environmental groups (Green Alliance, ECIU) pushed back sharply, accusing TBI of weakening climate ambition in service of corporate donors

Pensions & Welfare

- **"TBI calls for biggest overhaul of state pension since its inception"** (May 2026) — proposing significant reforms
- **Blocking benefits for anxiety/ADHD** — TBI recommended people with anxiety and ADHD should be blocked from claiming benefits (Apr 2026), drawing widespread criticism

Gaza & Middle East

- **Tony Blair's update on Gaza** delivered to the UN Security Council (Jun 2026)
- According to the **Financial Times (Feb 2026)**, TBI "provided training and consulting" for appointed members of the Gaza Board of Peace developed by Donald Trump
- TBI held meetings with NCAG (National Committee for the Administration of Gaza) in Cairo
- Blair has been "involved in designing plans for postwar Gaza for more than a year, using his institute to formulate ideas"

Ukraine

- TBI has been **actively operating in Kyiv**, advising the Ukrainian government on policy, as confirmed by multiple sources
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? The "Labour is Playing With Fire" Essay (26 May 2026)

Blair's most significant political intervention since Labour came to power — a **5,700-word essay** published by TBI that took direct aim at Starmer's government.

Key Arguments

- Labour had **"no coherent plan"** for the country
- Policies had **held back business** — criticised net-zero speed, planning constraints, business regulation
- Warned Labour was **"playing with fire"** over internal chaos and risked relegating Britain from the **"Premier League of nations"**

- Urged Labour to embrace the "**radical centre**" — not move left
- Called for **abandoning net zero** as a near-term target and moving closer to **Trump on energy**

Fallout

- **Andy Burnham** hit back forcefully: *"He doesn't mention inequality once... If you don't get how that's driving politics now, you are not understanding what's going on."* (Observer, 27 May)
 - **Wes Streeting** (in The Guardian): *"Inequality — the economic, social and democratic fracture running through modern Britain — is treated as peripheral rather than fundamental."*
 - **@novaramedia**: *"The Labour party should do more to support US wars while promoting fossil fuels and AI if it wants to win the next election, Tony Blair has suggested."*
 - **@soclp_uk**: *"If anything ever epitomised Blairism it would be the phrase 'the radical centre'."*
 - **BBC**: Full coverage of Burnham and Streeting's counter-attacks
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? Funding — The Larry Ellison Connection

TBI's funding model has drawn sustained scrutiny.

Sources of Funding

- **Private donors and grantmakers** — primary source
- **Government contracts** — advisory work with foreign governments
- **The Larry Ellison Foundation** — Oracle founder Larry Ellison has been reported to have **pledged or donated over £230 million** to TBI

The Oracle/New Statesman Investigation (Sep 2025)

The New Statesman published a major investigation ("Inside the Tony Blair Institute") revealing:

- **Ellison's massive funding** — over £230M into TBI
- **Quid pro quo concerns** — in return, Blair has been pushing the Starmer government to give Oracle favourable contracts, particularly on:
 - NHS data systems

- Government AI infrastructure
- Digital ID projects
- **Top civil servant boomerang** — staff moving between TBI and government roles

Reddit Reaction

- **r/ukpolitics** (9 Dec 2025): *"TL;DW: The Tony Blair Institute has received enormous backing from Oracle, and in return, Blair is pushing the Starmer govt to give the company favourable contracts"*
- **r/ukpolitics** (28 Sep 2025): *"Inside the Tony Blair Institute — Larry Ellison's £257m bet on Tony Blair" — 100+ comments*
- **r/unitedkingdom** (28 Sep 2025): *"Below him, the former prime minister nodded, clutching his Tony Blair Institute (TBI) notebook. Two weeks later, the TBI published a report..."*

Financials

- **October 2025:** Financial Times reported TBI was **undertaking restructuring and layoffs** amid continued losses, even as it increased AI-related work and sought new donors
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? Political Influence

Under Starmer's Government

TBI has had **significant influence in Starmer's Labour:**

- **Policy overlap** — Starmer's government adopted several TBI-adjacent positions on AI infrastructure, digital ID, public-sector reform
- **Staff pipeline** — multiple TBI alumni moved into government advisory roles
- **The Guardian (Sep 2023):** "The complex and corporate rise of the Tony Blair Institute" — documented TBI's extensive influence in Starmer's Labour
- **The London Economic:** SNP's Drew Hendry wrote to Starmer urging him to "**sever all ties**" with TBI
- **Democracy for Sale (Substack):** Detailed how TBI health policy director Charlotte Refsum was invited into government less than two months after Starmer's win

Under a Potential Burnham Government

- Burnham's allies have signalled a **less TBI-aligned approach** — Burnham explicitly criticised Blair's essay and the inequality blind spot
- However, TBI's international advisory work is independent of UK government, so its global operations would continue regardless

Spotlight on Corporate Ties (Jun 2026)

- **Zack Polanski** (Lib Dem / Green-aligned figure) wrote to the Cabinet Office asking them to disclose **all contact with the Tony Blair Institute**
- Multiple Facebook posts in June 2026 highlight: *"The developing evidence of the Tony Blair Institute operating as a conduit for big business is worrying"*
- **@donnablagblag (X)**: *"AI Data Centres, Net Zero, and Tony Blair: Starmer has aggressively promoted AI infrastructure with government pledges, 'AI growth zones' for fast-tracked planning..."*

? Criticism & Controversies

Issue	Detail	Source
Larry Ellison / Oracle funding	£230M+ from Oracle founder. Conflict of interest concerns — Blair pushing Oracle contracts to UK government	New Statesman / FT
Gaza "Peace Board" training	TBI provided training/consulting for Trump's Gaza Board of Peace appointees	Financial Times (Feb 2026)
Climate ambition weakening	Urged UK to abandon 2030 clean-power target, prioritise affordability	Green Alliance criticism
Benefits crackdown	Recommended blocking anxiety/ADHD claimants from benefits	TBI paper (Apr 2026)
Digital ID push	Aggressive advocacy for state-run digital ID — privacy concerns	Multiple sources
Restructuring & losses	Layoffs amid continued losses (Oct 2025), even as AI work expanded	Financial Times
War criminal tag	Persistent "war criminal" branding from Iraq War opponents across social media	X/Facebook
Revolving door	Staff moving between TBI and government — access concerns	New Statesman

Social Media Landscape (Jun 2026)

X/Twitter (Nitter)

TBI's official account (@InstituteGC) is active and engaged. Beyond official channels, discourse splits into:

Anti-TBI / Left criticism:

- @Alessa11alex: *"That greedy war criminal is everywhere! Tony Blair Institute... actively operating in Kyiv, advising the Ukrainian government"*
- @novaramedia: Sarcastic framing of Blair's essay — *"Labour should do more to support US wars while promoting fossil fuels and AI"*
- @soclp_uk: *"The only thing that was ever radical about [Blairism] was its radical commitment to Thatcherism"*
- @GJohnson_1978 (on Starmer resignation): *"Just like the bastard Tony Blair @InstituteGC, all bad smells tend to linger"*

Neutral / News-sharing:

- @JohnRentoul (7 Jun): *"Catch-up service. In case anyone needs a set of links to Tony Blair's essay and the main responses"* — linking to the TBI essay and Burnham/Streeting responses
- @EnergyOdisha: TBI signed MoU with Odisha state government on energy roadmap

Anti-TBI / Conspiracy-adjacent:

- @FBastiat1: *"Deep State ASSET & pathological LIAR Tony Blair is not to be trusted"*
- @tony_tweets1: *"This is one of the faces of @ClintonFdn backing an ethnic cleansing plan being implemented by @InstituteGC"*

Facebook (Phice, Jun 2026)

- Multiple posts framing TBI as a **corporate conduit**: *"Blair — far from being a voice of Labour — is now an unapologetic representative of corporate power"*
- **Digital ID concerns prominent**: *"DIGITAL ID: Tony Blair Institute has been key in this around the world. Oracle founder Larry Ellison has poured £230m+ into TBI"*
- **Zack Polanski's letter** to Cabinet Office — demanding disclosure of all government contact with TBI
- **Somali-language content**: Coverage of Blair's views on Islamic extremism and education

Reddit

Thread	Subreddit	Notes
"Labour has 'no coherent plan', says former PM Blair"	r/ukpolitics	26 May 2026 — <i>"It took me a while to realise that the Tony Blair Institute is basically like Virgin is to Richard Branson"</i>
"Inside the Tony Blair Institute — New Statesman investigation"	r/unitedkingdom	28 Sep 2025 — 100+ comments, heavy discussion of Oracle funding
"Tony Blair and Larry Ellison's deep business relationship"	r/ukpolitics	9 Dec 2025 — Oracle funding, NHS data concerns
"Block people with anxiety and ADHD from claiming benefits"	r/ukpolitics	28 Apr 2026 — TBI benefits paper draws anger
"Tony Blair calls for radical reset of climate change policies"	r/LabourUK	29 Apr 2025 — climate criticism

TBI's Own Publications (Recent)

Title	Date	Link
Tony Blair's tribute to Roy Hattersley	15 Jun 2026	institute.global
The Labour Party Is Playing With Fire	26 May 2026	institute.global
Digital Embassies and AI Sovereignty	28 May 2026	institute.global
Europe must shift from "climate-first, climate-only" approach	5 May 2026	institute.global
TBI calls for biggest overhaul of state pension	1 May 2026	institute.global
Tony Blair's update on Gaza to UN Security Council	28 Apr 2026	institute.global
Why Britain Needs an Energy-Strategy Reset	13 Feb 2026	institute.global
Open Source: How Middle Powers Can Build Influence in the Age of AI	9 Feb 2026	institute.global
Sovereignty in the Age of AI	19 Jan 2026	institute.global
Sovereignty, Security, Scale: A UK Strategy for AI Infrastructure	29 Jul 2025	institute.global
More of UK public support digital ID than oppose (research)	27 Mar 2026	institute.global

Summary Assessment

TBI is **not a traditional think tank** — it's a hybrid consultancy/policy shop with unprecedented access to governments worldwide, funded by a small number of ultra-wealthy donors (principally Larry Ellison/Oracle). Its influence on UK Labour under Starmer has been significant, particularly on AI infrastructure, digital ID, and public-sector reform.

Key concerns:

- **Transparency** — TBI's donor base is opaque; the extent of Ellison's funding only became clear via investigative journalism
- **Revolving door** — TBI staff moving into government roles
- **Policy skew** — TBI's positions consistently align with tech/energy corporate interests (AI, nuclear, fossil fuel pragmatism, digital ID)
- **Gaza involvement** — TBI training Trump's Gaza Board appointees raises questions about the institute's role in post-war planning

Under a Burnham government, TBI's direct UK influence may diminish — Burnham explicitly criticised Blair's vision — but its global advisory operations and donor network remain intact.

Sources

- **Wikipedia:** [Tony Blair Institute for Global Change](#)
- **Influence Watch:** [TBI profile](#)
- **TBI website:** institute.global
- **The Guardian:** "The complex and corporate rise of the Tony Blair Institute" (17 Sep 2023)
- **The Guardian:** "Tony Blair tells Starmer and rivals: abandon net zero" (26 May 2026)
- **The Guardian:** "Tony Blair's essay on Labour failings gets full marks for being... unhelpful" (26 May 2026)
- **BBC:** "Burnham and Streeting accuse Blair of ignoring inequality" (27 May 2026)
- **BBC:** "Labour has 'no coherent plan' for country, says Blair" (26 May 2026)
- **Politico Europe:** "Blair turns against Starmer, Burnham and Streeting in attack" (27 May 2026)
- **Financial Times:** TBI restructuring and layoffs (Oct 2025)
- **Financial Times:** TBI providing training for Gaza Board of Peace (Feb 2026)
- **New Statesman:** "Inside the Tony Blair Institute" — Larry Ellison investigation (Sep 2025)
- **The London Economic:** "Starmer urged to sever all ties with TBI"
- **Democracy for Sale (Substack):** "Inside the Tony Blair Institute — Larry Ellison's Money, NHS Data" (Sep 2025)
- **UKSIF:** Response to TBI energy report

- **ECIU:** Comment on TBI European energy strategy
 - **Nitter (X/Twitter):** Multi-query sweep, Jun 2026 — @InstituteGC, @novaramedia, @JohnRentoul et al.
 - **Phice (Facebook):** Multi-query search, Jun 2026
 - **Reddit:** r/ukpolitics, r/unitedkingdom, r/LabourUK — TBI-related threads
 - **SearXNG:** Web search sweep via Winbox, 22 Jun 2026
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