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The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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Committee on Standards in Public Life

19 July 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July 2017 formally inviting the Committee on Standards in Public Life to undertake a review into the issue of the intimidation experienced by Parliamentary candidates, including those who stood in the 2017 General Election campaign.

The Committee has discussed and would be pleased to undertake this review. As you say, whilst open and robust debate is absolutely essential in our democracy, we have reached the point where it is clear that we need to address the behaviour, which goes beyond what should be regarded as acceptable by those in public life. As an independent Committee, we will undertake the review objectively, with unbiased research and a willingness to listen to all those who wish to submit evidence.

We have noted the agreed terms of reference, set out again here for ease:

To review the intimidation experienced by Parliamentary candidates, including those who stood at the 2017 General Election. The Committee may also consider the broader implications for other candidates for public office and public office holders.

The review should:

- examine the nature of the problem and consider whether measures already in place to address such behaviour are sufficient to protect the integrity of public service; and whether such measures are (a) effective, especially given the rise of social media, and (b) enforceable;
- produce a report, including recommendations for action focused on what could be done in the short- and long-term and identifying examples of good practice.

We would also be pleased to consider the wider issue of the protection of the integrity of public service, which is fundamental to the Committee's remit. The review will recognise the important role of legitimate scrutiny of those standing for public office by the public and the press.

We will of course prioritise the review. We intend to take evidence from now until September, and invite all those with an interest in this issue to contribute. We aim to report by the end of the year.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Bew
Chair