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Chief Constable Sara Thornton QPM CBE  
National Police Chiefs Council  
10 Victoria Street  
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**Committee on  
Standards in  
Public Life**

13 December 2017

Dear Chief Constable Sara Thornton QPM CBE,

**Intimidation in Public Life: A Review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life**

I enclose a copy of the Committee on Standards in Public Life's report, *Intimidation in Public Life*, which was published today.

The increasing prevalence of intimidation in our public life, including of Parliamentary candidates at elections, should concern everyone who cares about our democracy. There has been persistent, vile and shocking intimidatory behaviour, and it is clear that much of this is targeted at certain groups.

We present a full body of evidence showing the extent and seriousness of the problem. We have found intimidation takes place across the political spectrum, both in terms of those engaging in intimidation and those receiving it.

During our review, we found evidence of inconsistency in policing during election periods, and some lack of understanding of social media and the context of MPs' and candidates' work by police force forces. We recommend that the National Police Chiefs Council should ensure that local police forces have sufficient training to enable them effectively to investigate offences committed through social media, and to ensure that local police forces can access access advice and guidance on the context in which MPs and Parliamentary candidates work. We suggest that this should be implemented within a year.

Our review also concluded that greater clarity as to what behaviour is and is not illegal among Parliamentary candidates, and what Parliamentary candidates can expect from their local police force, would assist Parliamentary candidates during election periods and would result in more effective policing. We recommend that the National Police Chiefs Council, working with the Crown Prosecution Service and the College of Policing, should produce accessible guidance for Parliamentary candidates giving clear advice on behaviour they may experience during a campaign which is likely to constitute a criminal offence and what they should do in the face of such intimidation. We suggest that this should be in place by the next general election.

Addressing this important issue in our public life will require a committed and concerned approach from a number of individuals and organisations. We will be monitoring progress on the implementation of our recommendations, and will keep in touch with you over the coming months in that regard.

We expect a comprehensive response to this issue. Determined action on the part of all those involved is required, as the cost to our democracy of not engaging constructively to resolve these issues is too high.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Bew  
Chair

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