



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

17 July 2017

Dear Paul

I am writing formally to ask the Committee on Standards in Public Life to undertake a review into the issue of the abuse and intimidation experienced by Parliamentary candidates, including those who stood in the 2017 General Election campaign. The issue has been highlighted by candidates across the political spectrum and the exchanges during the Westminster Hall debate on 12 July gave an illustration of some MPs' experiences. Robust debate is fundamental in an open democracy; however, threats to candidates and property goes well beyond that which should be regarded as acceptable by those in public life.

Given the independent standing of the Committee and its cross-party membership, it is well-placed to undertake such a review, which will importantly also be able to consider the wider issue of the protection of the integrity of public office, a fundamental element of the Committee's remit.

We have agreed the following terms of reference:

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.

The review will recognise the important role of legitimate scrutiny of those standing for public office by the public and the press.

I am grateful to the Committee for agreeing to undertake the review and while I appreciate the other demands on the Committee's time, I hope it will be possible for the Committee to prioritise this review and report as quickly as possible, mindful of the need to collect and hear evidence and give careful consideration of that evidence.

I am copying this letter to the First Secretary of State, the Minister for the Constitution, the Cabinet Secretary and Sue Gray in the Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely


The Lord Bew