



Our Ref: MFC/2011

Lord Evans of Weardale
House of Lords
London, SW1A 0PW

07 March 2019

Dear Lord Evans,

Intimidation in Public Life

The Government would like to again thank your Committee for its considered and thorough report on intimidation in public life. We have today laid a Written Ministerial Statement to update Parliament on Government's progress in implementing your Committee's recommendations since the Government's response was published in May 2018.

Across Government, we've taken steps towards implementing some of the Committee's recommendations. We've undertaken a public consultation entitled 'Protecting the Debate: Intimidation, Influence and Information'. The consultation sought views on a proposed new electoral offence of intimidation of candidates and campaigners, recasting the offence of undue influence, and on extending the imprints regime to cover digital electoral materials. The consultation closed in October 2018 and the Government's response will be published soon.

We have made four statutory instruments to deliver, and go beyond, the recommendation for removing the requirement for the addresses of candidates at local council elections to appear on the ballot paper. There are now in place for the local elections in May. We have also written to Local Authority Chief Executives to ensure they are working towards the goal of protecting candidate addresses.

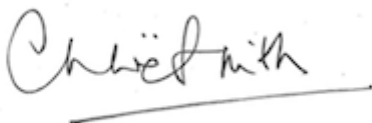
We have consulted on our Internet Safety Strategy Green paper, and we will publish a joint DCMS-Home Office White Paper. It will establish a government-wide approach to online safety, delivering the Digital Charter's ambitions of making the UK the safest place in the world to be online, whilst also leading the world in innovation-friendly regulation that supports the growth of the tech sector.

We have also held discussions with the social media companies and the Electoral Commission about how a 'pop up' social media team for elections could provide support for users that report inappropriate behaviour work and we will continue to collaborate as we explore potential next steps.

Alongside the work by the Government, other key organisations have been delivering on the recommendations from the Committee. This includes promoting security on and around the Parliamentary estate and providing support to MPs. The College of Policing, in collaboration with the Electoral Commission, has also been working to update the Policing Elections Authorised Professional Practice on stalking and harassment, which will be available in Spring 2019.

Intimidatory behaviour impacts on the quality of our democracy and the lives of those who play an active role in it. We agree with your Committee that it's incumbent on all of us in public life to combat this issue and we will continue to work with others including social media companies, policing and prosecution authorities, and political parties.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Chloe Smith", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and fluid.

Chloe Smith MP