



**The Commissioner for
Public Appointments**

Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE
Commissioner for Public Appointments
G/07, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ
Telephone 020 7271 0835

E-Mail publicappointments@csc.gov.uk

Sir Stuart Etherington
Chief Executive NCVO

13 March 2018

Dear Stuart

Many thanks for your letter of 5th March about the selection of the new Chair of the Charity Commission.

I followed the competition closely because of the importance of the post and I have already written to Damian Collins, Chair of the DCMS Select Committee, and to Steve Reed, Shadow Minister for Civil Society, about issues which they have raised. Both letters are on my website.

Because of the controversy over the appointment, I have sought, and received, the full papers from DCMS. I enclose the results of my review.

My focus has been on my remit as Commissioner for Public Appointments in seeing whether the competition followed the terms of the Governance Code for appointments-- in particular, whether the advisory interview panel made its recommendations on the basis of a fair and open competition, and whether ministers chose a candidate from amongst those judged as appointable by the panel. My conclusion is that the competition did not breach the terms of the Code.

It is not my role to comment on, or to second guess, the merits of the selection of Baroness Stowell, nor on the subsequent decision of Matt Hancock, the DCMS Secretary, to press ahead with her appointment despite the opposition of the DCMS Select committee after a pre-appointment hearing. Both these are matters for ministers and for Parliament. I am a strong believer in the pre-appointments system, having been subject to such scrutiny myself two years ago. Parliamentary backing is important for maintaining wider public trust in the appointments system. This applies not just to the pre-appointments process but also to a longer-term relationship between the holder of a public office and the relevant Select Committee.

It would, however, create a conflict of interest for me to discuss possible changes in the appointment system for the Chair of the Charity Commission when I have been investigating the operation of that process in this case. I am keen to keep a clear distinction between my role as regulator of the Governance Code and the decisions

UNCLASSIFIED

of ministers in making appointments, and pre-appointment hearings, especially when there is such controversy as there is now.

A meeting at present would therefore be premature I am afraid.

*All best wishes
y. sincerely*

Peter

Peter Riddell
Commissioner for Public Appointments

UNCLASSIFIED