



**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

Steve Reed MP  
Shadow Minister for Civil Society

14 March 2018

*Dear Steve Reed,*

In my letter of 27 February, I promised to let you know the result of my review of the appointment of Baroness Stowell to the Chair of the Charity Commission after receiving the relevant papers from DCMS.

I enclose the formal findings which, as usual, are being put up on my website. In summary, my conclusion is that the selection process was carried out in accordance with the Government's Governance Code for public appointments.

My conclusions are in line with my earlier reply to you, based on the distinction between the process to put forward appointable candidates, which I regulate, and the decision on whom to appoint, which is a matter for ministers and Parliament. I do not seek to comment upon, or second guess, this latter judgment.

Baroness Stowell had been suggested as a candidate by ministers, as is specifically permitted under clause 3.1 of the Code. She was then considered on a fair and open basis along with other candidates and was recommended as one of three appointable candidates by the advisory interview panel. No preference between the three was expressed by the panel. There was then a lengthy series of exchanges between ministers in DCMS and 10 Downing Street over the merits candidates. The process was prolonged by the Christmas and New Year holiday and the Cabinet reshuffle on 8th January, leading to the appointment of a new Secretary of State, and then the nomination of Baroness Stowell. These exchanges and the decision were all within the terms of the Code.

My remit does not cover pre-appointment hearings and what happens, as in this case, if a candidate is rejected by a Select Committee. That is a matter for ministers and for Parliament. However, I strongly believe in the importance of parliamentary backing for those chairing or serving on public bodies in order to sustain wider trust in public appointments. That involves not just pre-appointment hearings but also a continuing relationship with the relevant Select Committee.

I would be happy to discuss my report and any of these points further with you.

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All best wishes  
y sincerely

Peter Riddell

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