

Peter J Lawrence OBE
Chief Executive, Civil Service Commission



1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Telephone: 020 7271 0830

E-Mail peter.lawrence@csc.gov.uk or chief.executive@csc.gov.uk

Susie Uppal
Chief Executive, Press Recognition Panel
Mappin House
4 Winsley Street
London W1W 8HF

3 November 2021

Dear Susie,

Thank you for your letter of 14 October 2021 outlining the steps the PRP has taken to start the recruitment for a new Chair.

Under para 4.2 of the Royal Charter, the Commissioner for Public Appointments shall be asked to consider whether the process of appointment of that person was fair, open and merit-based, and, if he considers that it was, to confirm that in writing.

We had previously agreed that in light of then-Commissioner Peter Riddell's background in journalism, that I, as Civil Service Commission Chief Executive and the head of the Secretariat of which OCPA is a part, would make the assessment under para 4.2 to remove any perception of conflict of interest.

You may be aware that on 30 September 2021, Peter Riddell's term as Commissioner for Public Appointments came to an end and he was replaced by William Shawcross CVO. With a new Commissioner in post, it is necessary to review the current delegation arrangement, and consider whether William Shawcross similarly has any conflicts, and whether the delegation should remain or end. The starting presumption should be that the delegation to me is withdrawn. We will inform you of the decision over delegation in due course.

In the meantime, to allow William to have proper time to consider the issue of conflicts, and to get up to speed with this unique aspect of OCPA's work, I will continue the assurance function for this first step in the competition for a new PRP Chair. Further oversight will be required by OCPA as this competition progresses and can therefore revert to William if appropriate.

Thank you for the information about your planned competition in your letter. I note the PRP's intention to use recruitment agents, to advertise widely, to be purposeful in the consideration of diversity and the intended panel members, including an independent member, who is independent of the PRP. I have considered this information against the Royal Charter and the principles of merit, fairness and openness, using the definitions of those principles provided in the Governance Code for Public Appointments.

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I am satisfied PRP's process to find a new Chair will be based on merit, following a fair and open competition, and the Charter's provisions on the selection criteria and ineligibility will be adhered to.

I look forward to hearing more from you as the competition launches. I wish you all the best for a successful recruitment.

As ever, correspondence between us will be published on the OCPA website in the interests of transparency.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Peter J Lawrence".

Peter J Lawrence OBE