

To: Helen McNamara

17 May 2019

HOLAC PROCESS FOR VETTING PARTY POLITICAL NOMINEES

Process

1. In the first instance, the Prime Minister will indicate how many peerages she is minded to recommend. This will include the number of nominees opposition parties will be invited to put forward.
2. The DG Propriety & Ethics has typically acted as the initial contact point with the relevant Party Leader's offices to relay the proposed number and explain next steps. The Secretary to HOLAC can be the working level contact for the Parties, and can liaise on the detail of the process.

HOLAC

3. The Commission is notified of vetting requests for party-political nominees and Prime Minister's exceptions by No.10. Requests should be accompanied/followed up by:

- A completed consent form;
- A party chairman's certificate;
- A citation from the party leader or chairman setting out the individual's biography and the reasons for nomination.

2. The Secretariat then begins the vetting process (though in practice once a consent form has been received, the Secretariat can begin due diligence checks even if other documents follow). We approach the five main vetting agencies for all nominees (the Security Service, Honours and Appointments Secretariat in the Cabinet Office, Metropolitan Police, DWP and HMRC) in order for them to flag any concerns there may be in relation to the individual. **<REDACTED>**. We may additionally approach relevant government departments or agencies for their views, if deemed appropriate.

3. In parallel, the Secretariat conducts checks on each individual using the Electoral Commission's website. This provides details of loans and donations to political parties. **<REDACTED>**

4. **<REDACTED>**

5. **<REDACTED>**

6. **<REDACTED>**

7. The Secretariat produces a vetting report for each nominee, which takes a standard format (see Annex). The report records responses from departments and agencies and includes a summary of any issues arising in the public searches which might have a bearing on the Commission's criteria. It includes the outcomes of the various formal probity checks.

8. The vetting reports are provided to Commission Members in hard copy. We would expect the Chair to convene an urgent meeting to discuss the reports and agree the terms of advice to the Prime Minister (given this will be the Chair's first political list, and with new Members present he is unlikely to do this via conference call).

9. If the Commission is unable to support any names, the Secretariat will contact the party in question and offer them the chance to withdraw these and substitute alternative names. If they do so, vetting should be carried out on the new names. If the Commission is unable to support any of the substitutes, the party is not offered a chance to substitute again.

10. Once the Commission has reached a decision on all the names, a letter containing the Commission's advice is signed by the Chairman and sent to the PM. The letter may also draw the PM's attention to any issues the Commission thinks are likely to attract negative or adverse comments but which fall short of a failure to meet a probity check. It is then for the PM to take a view on such issues, including whether other parties might wish to reconsider nominations.

Timeline

10. Once the required paperwork has been received, the Secretariat asks for a minimum of five working days to produce vetting reports where multiple names have been put forward. This allows time for the various agencies to return the results of their checks.

11. A meeting of the Commission is convened as soon as possible after the reports are circulated.

12. The letter to the Prime Minister is then drafted and signed. This can be done within two days of the meeting. Realistically, a political list containing 10-20 names requires a minimum of two weeks to be cleared by the Commission.

Commission Membership - May/June 2019

13. The three current independent members are due to remain in post until 31st May 2019. We understand that it is likely that we will have confirmation of their replacements by that date. However, they will not be able to be inducted by the Secretariat until early June. The induction process can be completed swiftly, diaries allowing.

14. Given that the House of Lords is in recess over the bank holiday (w/c 27th May), and the holiday plans of at least one of the political members, it is unlikely that we would be able to convene a meeting during that week.

15. It will not be possible to conduct the vetting process unless the full membership is in place. Given the vetting timescale and the membership situation outlined above, it will be challenging to begin any such process until the first week of June.

16. Alternatively, or if there are delays to appointments, the current independent members could be asked to remain in post for a further month. This would require Prime Ministerial agreement and formal notification to the Commissioner for Public Appointments. In this scenario, the vetting process could begin in May with a likely outcome available in the first week of June.

<REDACTED>

HOLAC Secretariat

ANNEX

Ms. XXX

Reference 10/

Recommended For: Life Peerage

Name:

Address:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Nationality: British

Residence: Yes
(for tax purposes)

Proposed by: The Rt. Hon.

Grounds for recommendation: Party-political peerage

Citation: Attached

1. Checks with Agencies and Government Departments

Metropolitan Police Nil return

Security Service Nil return

Honours & Appt Sec Nil return

HMRC Nil return

Nil returns also received from [...]

2. Electoral Commission website

No record of any donations or loans. *[Default wording for no donations; alternatively, record the value of any donations or loans as necessary and the year in which they were given].*

3. Social Media, <REDACTED>

XXX has a high/ moderate/ low profile <REDACTED> his/her role as YYY.

[Example paragraph openings:]

In 2003, XXX was <REDACTED> for YYY

In April 2005, a report by ZZ Select Committee found XXX to have...

[Be as specific and extensive or as brief as warranted by the seriousness or complexity of the issues. Part 3 of Reports tends not to be longer than a side of A4 unless complex issues need explanation. Sequences of events should be reported chronologically with a clear statement of the outcome [if possible] e.g. the individual's resignation from a post or exoneration from a particular charge.]

[Finish with a paragraph about the individual's spouse]

Similar searches were conducted on her husband ZZZ, who has no <REDACTED>