

HOUSE OF LORDS

APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

Room G/40, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ

General Enquiries: 020 7271 0848

Internet: <http://lordsappointments.independent.gov.uk>

E-mail: enquiry@lordsappointments.gov.uk

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

By email only to: pacac@parliament.uk

29 November 2023

Dear Mr Wragg,

HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION - HOLAC ROLE IN LORD CAMERON APPOINTMENT

I am responding to your letter, dated 15 November 2023, regarding the appointment of The Rt Hon David Cameron as a peer in the House of Lords. Specifically, you asked whether HOLAC was ordinarily consulted in the manner employed in this instance, and whether there were any departures from the normal procedures concerning appointments in this instance.

As you are aware, the Commission has a longstanding policy that we do not comment on the detail of vetting of any individuals, in order to respect the rights of those individuals and to maintain the integrity of the vetting process. We are therefore unable to comment on Lord Cameron's vetting.

However, I would highlight the following text on the vetting page¹ of the Commission's website that explains the Commission's general approach to vetting ministerial appointments:

"Since the 2010 General Election, the Commission has been asked to vet for propriety individuals upon whom the Prime Minister wishes to confer a peerage in order that they might sit in the House of Lords to take up a ministerial role.

Ministerial appointees are required to make the same declarations about their tax status and donations as are other nominees. Although the Commission recognises that time pressure is often a factor in these cases, it will carry out vetting in the same way as outlined above."

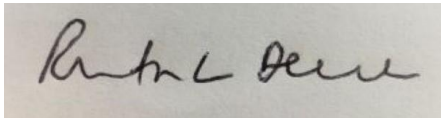
¹ <https://lordsappointments.independent.gov.uk/vetting>

I can confirm that the Commission provided vetting advice to the Prime Minister on The Rt Hon David Cameron in order for him to take up his ministerial role. The Commission has done so on two previous occasions this year, for Baron Mott and Baroness Swinburne.

The vetting procedure used is the same for all individuals vetted by the Commission, the criteria and process for which is outlined on the Commission's website. While the specific requirements may vary in each instance, it is acknowledged that the Commission can usually only undertake an expedited vetting process for ministerial appointments, given the time constraints of most government reshuffles and ministerial appointments.

The Commission is clear that it should always have sufficient time to consider vetting and that remains its priority when considering nominees. The Commission would not provide advice supporting an individual if it had not been able to complete vetting. Vetting can only ever be a 'spot check' of available current and historic information available to the time that vetting is carried out. However, there is some feeling by Commission members that the highly condensed timetable required in ministerial cases can impede the more thorough consideration of any vetting issues which the Commission is able to provide for other appointments.

Yours sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be 'Ruth L Deane'.

Chair, House of Lords Appointments Commission