

HOUSE OF LORDS

APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

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

E-mail: enquiry@lordsappointments.gov.uk

[To party leaders]

By email

New political peerage appointments

I am writing to you in my capacity as the independent chair of the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) to lay out how the Commission wishes to work with political parties for future party-political peerage nominations.

As you know, the Commission is an independent, advisory, non-departmental public body, established by the Prime Minister in 2000 to:

- Recommend individuals for appointment as non-party-political life peers; and
- Vet nominations for life peers, including those nominated by the UK political parties, to ensure the highest standards of propriety.

The Commission's remit in relation to political lists is narrow. We do not have a role in assessing the suitability of candidates: this is a matter for you, as leaders of political parties. The Commission's role is limited to advising the Prime Minister about the propriety of nominees.

To date, the Commission has taken the view that in this context, propriety means:

- i. The individual should be in good standing in the community in general and with the public regulatory authorities in particular; and
- ii. The past conduct of the nominee would not reasonably be regarded as bringing the House of Lords into disrepute.

In October 2022, my predecessor The Lord Bew wrote to the leaders of political parties to note that vetting may require consideration by the Commission of material which does not directly relate to the findings of a public authority or regulatory body.¹ These matters may be important when considering if an individual is in good standing and if there is past conduct which might bring the House into disrepute. However, the line where matters of personal or professional conduct move from a matter of suitability (which are for the party leaders to judge but which may be a presentational issue) to a matter of propriety (on which the Commission may give advice) is not always easily determined.

¹ Lord Bew's letter may be found on the [HOLAC website](#).

Lord Bew asked that party leaders should continue to bear in mind the long-established Principles of Public Life as a benchmark for assessing conduct. I am now repeating that request, and seeking from you an active assurance that when you submit nominees for party-political peerages:

- You know of no reason why the nominee would not be found appointable to the House of Lords on the grounds of propriety.
- That the nominee has, to the best of your knowledge, demonstrated past conduct consistent with the duties of a member of the House of Lords. This includes being in good standing in the community and with regulatory authorities; and that the past conduct of the nominee would not bring the House of Lords into disrepute, including with reference to conduct relevant to propriety standards in public life.
- You are assured that the nominee understands the role and requirements of membership of the House of Lords.

I would welcome your confirmation that your party has processes in place to determine and assess these factors before any further nominations are submitted to the Commission.

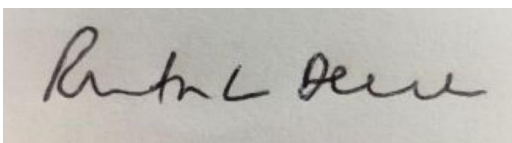
I would also like to draw your attention to the enclosed forms, which should be used with immediate effect for any future political peerage nominations. The new forms aim to lay out more clearly the requirements and declarations needed from both new nominees and the political parties.

Alongside the forms, the Commission expects to see adequate information about each nominee, to explain their career history and achievements to date. This information should provide a complete description of the individual's public service. This helps the Commission to understand what vetting checks may be relevant to the individual and why they have been proposed.

The Secretariat of the Commission would be happy to discuss any issues with your office if helpful. Please contact enquiry@lordsappointments.gov.uk or 07355 021 584.

A copy of this letter has been placed on the Commission's website.

Regards,

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

Chair, House of Lords Appointments Commission