Dear Bob,

RECRUITMENT OF THE PRISONS AND PROBATION OMBUDSMAN

Thank you for your letter of 9 February about the recruitment of a new Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO), and for the Committee’s consideration of our recruitment plans.

In your letter dated 29 January, you noted that the person specification for the post had changed from the previous competition in 2017. These changes followed discussion with departmental and Cabinet Office officials. They were made with the aim of shortening and simplifying the language used in order to appeal to as broad a range of candidates as possible.

Having considered further your comments on the specification, I have added back in an explicit reference to financial management. A revised version of the person specification is attached together with a note of the key responsibilities — my apologies that the latter was inadvertently omitted from my earlier letter. As with the person specification, we have revised and simplified the key responsibilities to broaden their appeal.

Also in your letter, you asked whether we have made any other changes to try and ensure a successful outcome from this third recruitment campaign. I have, for this latest campaign, endorsed the use of recruitment consultants to provide a list of qualified candidates who are likely to be found suitable for this important role. A supplier has not yet been identified, but we will ensure that they are aware of the importance of encouraging applications from as strong and diverse a field as possible. This has caused a slight delay in the competition timeframe, and we now planning for a pre-appointment hearing in early July. An updated timeframe is also attached to this document.

I can confirm that neither the remuneration or time commitment have changed since the campaign was last run.

Finally, I will be pleased to keep the Committee informed on the progress of this campaign and thank you for your comments.

Yours ever,

RT HON DAVID GAUKE MP