Dear Bob,

INVOLVEMENT OF HM CHIEF INSPECTOR OF PROBATION IN A SHORT-TERM REVIEW INTO FARM INSPECTION

Thank you for your letter of 17th April following the Justice Select Committee’s hearing on Transforming Rehabilitation, and for the time the Committee has dedicated to considering this important subject. As ever, I acknowledge and appreciate the scrutiny provided by the Justice Select Committee to hold Ministers to account, and ensure that decisions taken on sensitive issues remain appropriate in the midst of ever-changing circumstances.

I understand the weight of the issues currently facing the probation system. The role played by HMI Probation in assessing probation performance and highlighting where vital change is necessary is crucial in driving improvement. Dame Glenys is a well-respected and able public servant who has provided thorough and exacting challenge to probation providers. Under her leadership tough questions have been asked about delivering the most rigorous standards demanded of those engaged in the important work of rehabilitation. It’s important to place on the record the consistently high quality that Dame Glenys Stacey has set in her role and has pursued in every area of public service.

Understandably the Justice Select Committee raised concerns about Dame Glenys Stacey’s involvement in the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs’ farming review. Her involvement in the farming inspection review is a reflection of her outstanding abilities and the current demands placed upon government in light of Brexit. For this reason, it was deemed in the public interest for Dame Glenys to take up the position of chair for this review. This absolutely does not undermine the importance that Dame Glenys nor Ministers in either department place on the work of HMI Probation.

We thank the Justice Select Committee once again for highlighting this issue and following further reflection and discussion, it is proposed that Dame Glenys will continue to chair the review which is expected to occupy approximately 20% of her time for the duration of the review, after which her sole role will be the Chief Inspector of Probation.

RORY STEWART MP