5th May 2016

Dear Messrs Field and Wright

I refer to your joint letter dated 28 April and to Mr Field’s letter dated 3 May in relation to your invitation to me to give oral evidence to inquiries being conducted by the House of Commons Select Committees that you each chair.

Much inaccurate and misleading information about my actions in relation to BHS has been written in the press. I therefore welcome the opportunity to assist inquiries by your Committees that are genuinely intended to get to the truth in a fair and balanced way and on the basis of actual facts.

I do, however, wish to record my concerns about various statements you have made to the press (for example, calling for me to lose my knighthood or suggesting that I have asset stripped BHS without regard to pensions and employees). These statements suggest that you are leaping to conclusions before any evidence from any witness has been heard. They suggest that there will be no real attempt to run your inquiries in a fair way and that the outcome is pre-determined.

The inquiries of your Committees depend on the voluntary assistance of witnesses. As you are aware, your inquiries now overlap with a number of parallel regulatory and other investigations and proceedings. You must appreciate that witnesses will be less willing to offer your Committees their assistance if the Committee Chairs do not act in a responsible way, in particular appearing to encourage the public vilification of witnesses before the inquiries have even begun.
I would like your assurances please that you will cease this trial by media and that from now on your inquiries will be conducted in a manner that is fair to all involved.

Yours sincerely

SIR PHILIP GREEN