



Education Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon Justine Greening MP
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21 December 2017

Dear Justine

Thank you for your letter of 14 December regarding the appointment of a new Chair of the Social Mobility Commission.

At the Liaison Committee's meeting on 21 December, I proposed to the Prime Minister that the opportunity now be taken to reconsider how Government can best take account of social justice across every domestic policy, by putting a social justice commission at the heart of Downing Street. While I understand that you are keen to launch a new recruitment campaign, I invite you to consider whether the Commission, as established under the legislation, remains the best vehicle for delivering social justice.

The Committee noted that in the draft applicant pack a "proven, credible track record of commitment to improving social mobility, and an in-depth and up-to-date understanding of the issues relating to this area" was the second point under essential criteria. The Committee considers that this requirement should be front and centre of any new recruitment, with other criteria subordinate to it.

The Committee also believes that it is essential that any successful candidate be a persuasive and influential voice for social justice within Government. For this reason, we would be in favour of the reinstatement of the criteria from the previous recruitment pack which spoke of gaining the confidence of audiences.

The legislation sets out that "the Commission must on request give advice to a Minister of the Crown about how to improve social mobility in England". We note that in the applicant pack, the role description for the Chair of the Social Mobility Commission includes "potentially being asked to advise Ministers on particular issues". We hope that as the Government seeks to tackle social injustice, Ministers will regularly use opportunities to seek advice from the Commission (or any similar vehicle).

We encourage you to take this opportunity to consider a different approach and look forward to hearing from you further in the new year. We would be interested to know what other proposals you have considered, and the Committee would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter informally with you further before you commence any campaign.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP