



Science and Technology Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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<http://www.parliament.uk/science>

From Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP, Chair

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP
Government Chief Whip
House of Commons

13 September 2017

Dear Gavin,

Election of Select Committee members

On Monday the House approved a motion to appoint members to Select Committees, including the Science and Technology Committee. The Committee now has eight members (including myself as Chair). The practice is for parties to run their own processes to identify members to put forward for the House's approval, but this has resulted in no women currently being nominated for my Committee. I am concerned that this will affect the ability of the Committee to perform its role effectively. While the 2017 Election has produced the most diverse group of MPs ever, this is not being reflected in the membership of the Committee.

There appears to be no overall coordination in the nomination process, and I have no powers to intervene directly. However, with three vacancies still to be filled — two Conservatives and one Labour — there is an opportunity to address this imbalance at least to some degree. I would like to encourage you in the strongest terms to do whatever you can to ensure that women are included in the remaining nominations to the Science and Technology Committee.

Looking to the future, I would be grateful if you, with the other parties, could review the way in which parties invite nominations to encourage an appropriate gender-balance and a wider diversity. In due course I intend to raise questions about this area of the House's practice with the Liaison Committee and others.

I am writing in similar terms to the Opposition Whip.

Norman Lamb MP
Chair