



**The Commissioner for
Public Appointments**

William Shawcross CVO
Commissioner for Public Appointments
G/07, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ
Telephone 020 7271 6729 / 020 7271 0815
E-Mail publicappointments@csc.gov.uk

3 November 2021

Lord Callanan
Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

By email: Minister.Callanancorrespondence@beis.gov.uk

Cc: publicappointments@beis.gov.uk

Dear Lord Callanan,

Thank you for your letter consulting me on the extension to the interim appointment of Stephen Lake as Chair of the Ordnance Survey Limited (OS) in your letter of 18 October.

My officials approached your public appointments team for more information about the context for this proposed extension. I would like to thank your officials for liaising with the UKRI officials running the competition on my behalf to provide further advice. I am content with the extension but I would like to tell you of my concerns with this competition.

I note the competition was delayed at launch, and that no explanation has been given as to why this was so. I note my predecessor approved the interim appointment of Stephen Lake in March 2021 but the competition was not launched until July. I am concerned that the best use was not made of the time given for the interim appointment to get a new chair in place.

However, I note the strong field of 78 applications, and how officials have outlined a timetable that will place a substantive candidate in place by February 2022.

With the unexpected departure of the Chair and now the Chief Executive, leadership in the OS now seems vulnerable. I accept that Mr Lake remaining in post until Feb 2022 will give the organisation some much needed stability. However, the arrangement whereby Mr Lake holds both the Chair and Chief Executive roles simultaneously is unusual, and I would hope that this is not maintained beyond Feb 2022. This is by no means intended as a statement on Mr Lake's capabilities or integrity, but instead a view on the usual practices of good governance for public bodies.

I am content with the extension of Mr Lake's appointment without competition, for 3 months, until 6 Feb 2022, or when a substantive chair is in place, under Section 3.3 of the Governance Code. This will take Mr Lake's term length in total to 12 months.

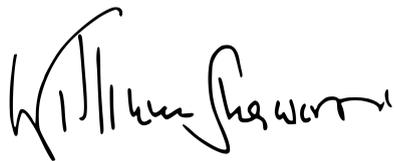


William Shawcross CVO
Commissioner for Public Appointments
G/07, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ
Telephone 020 7271 6729 / 020 7271 0815
E-Mail publicappointments@csc.gov.uk

Please note, I am unlikely to approve any more extensions to this term without exceptional circumstances being made clear, because of the Governance Code's emphasis on appointment on merit through competition. My predecessor wrote to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster recently with his concerns on this topic and I will be watching closely to ensure that the Governance Code's ambition to conclude a competition within three months of launching is given due regard.

As always, once Mr Lake's extension is announced, this letter will be placed on my website in the interests of transparency around those appointed without competition.

With best wishes,



William Shawcross
Commissioner for Public Appointments