



Anne Galbraith
Chairman

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Phil Hope
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
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10 December 2004

Dear Minister

Sustaining the Judicial Independence of Valuation Tribunals

Thank you for your letter of 6 December, informing me of the Government's conclusions, following the recent consultation exercise on sustaining Judicial Independence. Can I first of all take this opportunity to record our thanks to your officials for the detailed work they have undertaken in analysing the responses, and in seeking to assist you to find a way forward which reflects views put forward during the consultation, and which will support the necessary partnership between the VTS and the Valuation Tribunals.

My Board has had time to consider your conclusions over the course of this week. We are grateful for your confirmation that you consider the constitutional model adopted for the VTS is in itself an important safeguard for judicial independence. Your conclusion that two committees should be established has significant resonance with the interim

arrangements we had adopted, and can indeed be seen as an enhancement to our constitutional structure. My Board is confident that this approach will offer practical and effective support for the sustaining of judicial independence, and I can give you our assurance that we concur with your view.

We will now work in partnership with representatives from the service to implement these arrangements as soon as possible. A meeting of our interim committee is scheduled for early January, with a Presidents' conference due to take place in early February, and it is likely that the necessary steps can be taken then.

I note that your letter and appendices will be placed on the ODPM website. It is our intention to follow suit, and place the material on the VTS website.

Yours sincerely

Anne Galbraith
Chairman, Valuation Tribunal Service

This letter is sent electronically, and so is unsigned.
The original letter has been sent by post 10 December 2004