

28<sup>th</sup>. June 2017

Dear Francis,

I know you are aware of the social media reaction to aspects of my personal statement in seeking election to be Vice-Chairman of the CBA, almost all of it from people who have no vote in the election.

Following an open letter to me from Zoe Gascoyne, Chair of the Criminal Law Solicitor's Association, I wrote an open reply which has also been circulated on social media. I had hoped that this would clarify what I was in fact trying to say.

In standing in this election, I was prepared for a robust and honest debate. I was not prepared for the personal abuse I have received from some quarters and which my reply to Zoe does not seem to have stemmed.

The whole issue of the current structure and proposed changes to both the AGFS and LGFS is to my mind the single most important issue facing the two branches of our profession but of course is also potentially the most divisive, which is why a united front is essential. The events of the last 48 hours have made it very clear to me that I am not the right candidate to take on the role of Vice-Chair and that Chris Henley QC should therefore succeed Angela Rafferty QC.

Whilst I recognize that by withdrawing from this election I am depriving the CBA membership of a choice of candidate, it seems to me a necessary step so that the professions can be as unified as possible in their future dealings with the government, which must ultimately be the main priority.

I am sorry that the way I expressed myself in my statement has caused such difficulties, especially to my colleagues at Red Lion Chambers, who had no role in my candidacy and who had no input or advance sight of my statement. I very much hope that nobody taking an adverse view of me allows that view to affect their view of my chambers.

I also hope that those who read my reply to Zoe and this letter will see that it was a matter of clumsy expression and not, as suggested, an attack on the solicitors' profession, with whom I have worked closely for 32 years and which I hold in the highest regard.

I would ask that this letter is made public so that those who have already voted for me or were intending to do so understand my reasons for withdrawing.

Yours ever,

Simon