Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy - Supplementary written evidence (ROE0022)

When I gave evidence before the Committee on 25th March, I referred to the Government’s plans to consult on a wider reform to Companies House. I am pleased to inform you that this consultation was issued today to seek views on a series of reforms to limit the risk of misuse of UK corporate entities.

We are seeking views on a series of reforms:

- Knowing who is setting up, managing and controlling companies: Those who have a key role in companies will have their identity verified
- Improving the accuracy and usability of data on the register: Companies House will now be able to query and corroborate information before it is entered on the register. This will also mean it is easier and quicker to remove inaccurate information from the register
- Protecting personal information on the register: In a minority of cases the register can be misused to identify personal information, which can then be used for criminal purposes. Under these proposals Directors will be given additional rights over their information, for example personal home addresses, while ensuring this information is still available in a transparent manner to public authorities where appropriate.
- Improving the detection of possible criminal behaviour: Better information sharing by Companies House, other Government bodies and financial institutions will better protect businesses and ensure faster and more sophisticated identification of possible criminal activity – benefitting businesses and consumers.

Certain of the proposed changes would also be relevant to those entities that will fall within the provisions on the draft Registration of Overseas Entities Bill. For example, we would expect the People with Significant Control (and in some cases managing officers) of such entities to undergo identity verification.

These reforms will support our modern Industrial Strategy in making sure the UK is the best place to start and grow a business.

I am copying this letter to members of the Committee.

Kelly Tolhurst MP

5 May 2019