



Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street,
London

17 September 2020

Dear Alok,

Government interference in the work of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee

I'm writing further to the evidence session my Committee held this morning in respect of the 'OneWeb' purchase authorised by your department.

As you know, my Committee intends to understand the capabilities of the OneWeb satellite network and how this relates, or not, with the Government's previous commitment to invest in a sovereign satellite system post-Brexit.

However, at 3PM yesterday, after the department had been informed of witnesses on Monday and publicly announced on Wednesday morning, your department contacted my clerks to inform us that you did not 'authorise' one of our witnesses to attend. To be clear, you have no such power to authorise witnesses to my Committee and it is a gross interference with the work of Parliament for the Government to intervene in this way.

My Committee is authorised by Parliament to hold you, your colleagues and your department to account. As Chair, I have acted in good faith to build a relationship of mutual cooperation and respect with your department which I had expected to receive in return.

My Committee and I take this interference with our work extremely seriously. If you and your department continue to act in this way I will have to escalate the issue to both the Liaison Committee and Mr Speaker.

DARREN JONES MP
CHAIR, BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY COMMITTEE