



Professor Nick Hopkins
Law Commission
52 Queen Anne's Gate
London
SW1H 9AG

11 September 2017

Dear Professor Hopkins,

MARRIAGE LAW

I am writing to you in relation to your proposal to review the law of marriage ceremonies in England and Wales as part of your next programme of law reform, and to respond to the scoping paper you published in December 2015.

Marriage is one of our most important institutions, and I appreciate the work that you have undertaken concerning the law around marriage in England and Wales. The Government has given careful consideration to the matters raised in your report, and to whether now is the right time to undertake further work on such fundamental reform.

After careful consideration, I have concluded that now is not the right time to develop options for reform to marriage law. As you will know, the family justice system is under significant pressure at present from a sustained increase in public and private law cases. The Department is currently identifying options for alleviating those pressures so that the family justice system is able to deliver the best outcomes for children and families, and is able to protect its most vulnerable users. Accordingly, we need to focus on reforms in this area of the system in order to meet the unprecedented increases in demand. Any opportunities for primary legislation will need to support that aim.

I realise that this decision may be disappointing, but I am not ruling out the option of further work in this area in a future programme of work, and I am happy to keep this under review.

I thank you for your efforts in formulating this report, and I look forward to continuing to work with you on family justice matters in the future.

You should, Dominic Raab

DOMINIC RAAB MP