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Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP
Shadow Secretary of State for the Home Department

**Committee on
Standards in
Public Life**

5 November 2021

Dear Nick Thomas-Symonds,

Thank you for your letter of 4 November 2021 regarding the matter of the Home Secretary and the government's settlement with Sir Philip Rutnam over his claim for unfair dismissal. You asked again that we start an inquiry into the case.

My Committee does not have a remit to look at individual cases. I said this in my reply to your letter of 19 November 2020 and have made this clear a number of times in correspondence with the Labour Party during the past year. We have not, as you state in your letter, issued any findings that the Home Secretary had broken the Ministerial Code. Sir Alex Allan, former Ministerial Adviser on Ministers' Interests, reported earlier this year that 'her behaviour has been in breach of the Ministerial Code, even if unintentionally'. The post of Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests is now held by Lord Geidt.

You may find it helpful if your office spoke to our secretariat in advance of sending letters to the media to ensure they are addressed to the appropriate body.

You also asked how I envisage our change to the Leadership descriptor, outlined in our recent report, being enforced. The Principles are a guide to personal conduct. They underpin and are translated into rules in Codes of Conduct across public life and are enforced through the policy and process that surrounds such codes, within organisations that serve the public or deliver public services on behalf of the taxpayer.

You may be interested to know that the Committee's next review will consider best practice and how organisations build a strong ethical culture in line with the Nolan principles in public sector organisations. We would very much welcome your input to that review.

I am copying this letter to Darren Tierney, Director General, Propriety and Ethics Team, Cabinet Office.

We will publish this letter on the Committee's website.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL
Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life