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CODE OF PRACTICE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY PUBLICITY

My officials have today written to the Chief Executives of all principal local authorities in England, including yours, letting them know how the Secretary of State is minded to exercise his powers, in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, to direct compliance with the Publicity Code. As that letter explains, the Secretary of State intends to consider whether, and if so how, to exercise these powers as soon as practicable after they come into force on 30 March 2014.

It has been suggested that your council might not be complying with the Publicity Code, which was issued on 31 March 2011 and which applies to your authority. As you know the great majority of local authorities comply with the Code which sets out a range of provisions in relation to local authority publicity, including about the frequency, content and appearance of local authority newssheets or similar communications. I can see no reason for any council not to comply with the Code – non-compliance would, I believe, invariably involve an unacceptable waste of taxpayers' money and council resources.

I would suggest therefore that prior to the Secretary of State's new powers coming on-stream at the end of March, you take steps to ensure that your council is in complete compliance with the provisions of the Code.

I am copying this letter to the leader of the opposition in your local authority.

BRANDON LEWIS MP