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Thank you for your continued and constructive engagement with the Cabinet Office. I was pleased to discuss the work of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) with you recently and to receive your letter of 11 November.

As the 30th anniversary of the Committee's seminal first report comes into view, you are right to point out the vital role the Committee has played in shaping the standards landscape that exists today. As the custodians of the Nolan Principles, the Committee will always be at the forefront of our public country's debate on ethical standards. The Government remains committed to the role of the Committee and is grateful for your work. I look forward to reading your report on accountability in public bodies next year.

Since we last met, the Government published an updated Ministerial Code. I was pleased to see the Committee welcome the new Code, which acted on a key recommendation the Committee made previously on the Independent Adviser's right to initiate investigations. You will also note that the Code was restructured to better distinguish between matters of ethical standards and questions of government procedure, resolving a problem identified by the Committee and others.

The Ethics and Integrity Commission will be an important next step in developing the standards landscape. I trust that CSPL will continue to play a significant role in supporting its work, and we will update Parliament and the Committee on the establishment of the Commission in due course.

Thank you for taking the time to write about these important matters.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP  
Minister for the Cabinet Office  
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