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Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State for Housing Communities  
and Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
Westminster  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Dear Mr Jenrick

### **Local Government Ethical Standards**

I write to you at the behest of the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee of Slough Borough Council, in my capacity as the Council's Monitoring Officer.

In February 2019 the Council invited the Local Government Association to undertake a Corporate Peer Review of the Council. This was very shortly after the publication, in January 2019, of the report by the Cabinet Committee on Standards in Public Life upon their review of Local Government Ethical Standards. The Local Government Association, as part of their peer review of the Council, recommended that the Council to take account of the Committee's Report and how it related to the Council.

Since that time the Council, through its Member Panel on the Constitution and its Audit & Corporate Governance the Committee, have been working assiduously to implement the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in public as part of its Ethical Framework.

The Council is now also at the cusp of responding to the consultation upon the national model code of conduct published by the Local Government Association.

In the course of their journey to improve their Ethical Framework the Council have faced challenges caused by the fact that several important improvements they might make are dependant upon legislative changes which are required to primary legislation in order to put the Cabinet Committee's recommendations into effect.

The principal changes requiring legislative change which would benefit the Council's ambitions include, inter alia, the enactment of a statutory presumption that Councillors are acting in an official capacity in their public conduct, including statements on publically accessible social media; the statutory extension of the definition of disclosable pecuniary interests to include unpaid directorships, trusteeships and management roles in a charity or body of a public nature and membership of organisations that seek to influence opinion or policy; the ability to suspend a Councillor, without allowances, with the agreement of the

independent person when such a sanction would be proportionate and statutory clarification of the powers of a local authority to bar councillors from council premises and to withdraw facilities as sanctions.

I have , therefore been charged by the Council's Audit & Corporate Governance Committee to write to you to highlight these challenges and to exhort you to use your best endeavours to seek to achieve the enactment, as soon as reasonably possible, of the necessary statutory changes desired by this Council and by numerous others to improve and fortify their Ethical Frameworks.

I look forward to receiving a positive response from you to convey to the Council and its Audit & Corporate Governance Committee.

Yours sincerely,

**Hugh Peart**  
**Monitoring Officer**  
**Slough Borough Council**