



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Lord Khan of Burnley
Parliamentary Under-Secretary
of State

4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Lord Anderson of Ipswich
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

29 July 2024

Dear Lord Anderson of Ipswich,

Thank you for your contribution to the debate on Tuesday 23 July on the Constitution and Devolution. In the debate, you raised some important proposals around integrity and standards in government, which I have provided responses to below.

You asked whether the Government intends to bring forward legislation to put into statute the Prime Minister's Independent Adviser for Ministerial Interests, the Public Appointments Commission, ACOBA, and related rules and codes of conduct. You also asked whether the Government favours an expansion of the lobbying register, and whether the Government has considered widening the scope and increasing the frequency of departmental transparency declarations.

The Government is committed to restoring public confidence in government and ensuring that all of those in public service are held to the highest standards. We will take the time to consider the best means to deliver this and are not ruling anything out at this stage. We are committed to establishing a new independent Ethics and Integrity Commission and will ensure it is set up in a manner able to deliver this reset in public life.

With regards to the Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests, the Prime Minister met Sir Laurie Magnus on his first day in office to discuss standards and the enforcement of standards and is committed to ensuring that the Independent Adviser has the powers to start investigations into misconduct and that they will have access to the evidence they need. Further detail on this will be set out in due course.

The Government is also committed to working with Parliament to restore trust in politics, politicians and Parliament. In line with the Government's manifesto commitment, on 25 July, the House of Commons approved a motion to establish a Modernisation Committee. The Committee will be tasked with driving up standards and addressing the culture of the House of Commons, as well as improving working practices.

Ministers at the Ministry of Justice will also be considering a response to the Law Commission's proposals on misconduct in public office in due course.

You also referenced Skeleton Bills and legislation. I would like to echo the point made by the Attorney General, Lord Hermer, in his opening speech by assuring you and the other noble Lords who raised this point that we will seek to promote the highest standards in how we legislate,

seeking to increase the accessibility and certainty of law, including by guarding against the abuse of the proper role of secondary legislation.

You also asked whether I see merit in a report on the Review of the UK Constitution that the Bennett Institute published last year. The Government takes seriously its constitutional role and recognises the important role of Parliament in our constitutional arrangements. The Government is committed to delivering the proposals set out in our manifesto, which as has been noted throughout the recent debate, includes the commitment to modernise Parliament; the Bill announced in the King's Speech regarding the role of hereditary peers in this house is a first step.

I am copying this letter to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in the Cabinet Office, and I will also place a copy in the House Library.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Khan', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lord Khan of Burnley
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State