



HM Government

Simon Case
Cabinet Secretary
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

Lord Berkeley
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

7 September 2021

Dear Lord Berkeley,

Thank you for your letter of 9 July, and your further letter of 12 August.

I understand your strength of feeling on this matter, and wanted to write a personal response. I want to make clear as Head of the Civil Service that I expect officials to always abide by the rules set out in the Civil Service Code, and provide the highest standards of advice to ministers. The Prime Minister expects all departments to keep Parliament regularly updated given the importance of continued parliamentary scrutiny in the effective operation of Government.

Your original letter raised a number of points about the actions of ministers and the Department for Transport in regards to the costs of High Speed Two. I asked the Permanent Secretary at the Department for Transport to respond to your letter, in view of her role as Accounting Officer for the Department. As such the Permanent Secretary is accountable to Parliament - and in particular to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) - for the stewardship of public resources. Bernadette has, in responding to your letter, as well as in evidence before the PAC, given an account of herself in response to the points you raise.

Your letter specifically asked me to investigate a potential breach of the Ministerial Code. The Code itself is clear, as stated in Section 1.4, that it is not

for the Cabinet Secretary, or any other official, to enforce provisions of the Code. Instead, as has been the case under successive administrations since the Blair Government, the decision to investigate matters, and on the appropriate action to take, lies with the Prime Minister.

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Case', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

SIMON CASE