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Nick Gibb MP

Minister of State for Schools

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Mr Mike Tones
North East Strategic Partnership for Sustainable Schools
c/o The EWE Centre
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25 October 2010

Dear Mr Tones

Thank you for your letter of 21 July, addressed to the Secretary of State, about the Government's plans for education for sustainable development. I am replying as the Minister of State for Schools. I apologise for the long delay in sending you a response.

I would first like to thank you for your good wishes. I recognise the importance of sustainability and I want to make sure that schools know how best to improve this aspect of their performance. Our approach to reform is based on the belief that schools perform better when they take responsibility for their own improvement. In many ways this is consistent with the sustainable schools approach, but we believe strongly that schools raise standards most effectively when they have autonomy.

We want schools to have the right information to enable them to make choices. There is a substantial body of good practice relating to sustainable schools that is still available through the Department for Education's website. The decision for schools to engage with the Sustainable Schools Framework will continue to be voluntary, as it has always been. Furthermore, although we will no longer provide central support for regional networks, schools should still regard sustainable development as critically important in preparing children and young people for the future.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Gibb MP