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The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

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Dear Prime Minister,

It has been a privilege to serve in your Cabinet. Having been a minister since July 2014, and having served all five Conservative Prime Ministers, I consider it is now the right time to step back from government.

In my years of service and different ministerial posts, I am proud to have delivered for people, the planet and prosperity throughout that time. Turning ambition into action and delivery has been the hallmark of my service. I want to thank the many dedicated civil servants, ministers and special advisers who have helped me achieve that.

As you know, Defra touches so much of our lives. It is the voice and guardian of nature, food security and our countryside communities. Just in the last year, I was pleased to publish our Environmental Improvement Plan, launch our Plan for Water, and help to secure the Global Biodiversity Framework in Montreal and the fund to deliver it. I have strengthened the foundations for Defra to deliver here in the UK and globally, such that this government has achieved more than any other to protect our planet. Having a sustainable farming and food sector is critical for our long term food security, and by listening to farmers and making changes, I am confident we can deliver that sustainability and strengthen both our farming and fishing sectors. As for our rural communities, unleashing rural opportunity and championing the countryside is a core Conservative principle that will endure.

I served alongside you during Covid when I was at the Department for Work and Pensions. My key achievement was that during the pandemic, we ensured that the welfare system continued to support people even in the most challenging circumstances in half a century. We looked after the most vulnerable people and helped many people back into work. In particular, we worked together on Kickstart to give young people a lifeline and confidence in their future.

In my time as Health Secretary, I was pleased to present Our Plan for Patients and acted swiftly to protect the vulnerable and the NHS during last winter.

While there is more I could write about what I am proud of having achieved in government, I have always been most proud in representing my constituents of Suffolk Coastal and acting on local issues.

I look forward to supporting you from the backbenches and working together for a Conservative majority at the next election, which I believe to be profoundly in the national interest.

Yours ever,

Therese Coffey