Ethical Standards Commissioner

STANDARDS COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND

INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

Craig Hoy MSP
Convener
Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee
The Scottish Parliament

06 November 2026

Sent by email to: SJHLG.committee@parliament.scot

Dear Convener

Committee Scrutiny of the Work of our Offices

We are writing to invite the Committee to consider undertaking scrutiny of the work of the Office of the Ethical Standards Commissioner and the Standards Commission for Scotland.

Both organisations occupy important positions within Scotland's ethical standards framework. Collectively, we are entrusted with supporting high standards of conduct in local government and maintaining public confidence in the conduct of elected members, by promoting the Councillors' Code of Conduct and investigating and adjudicating on complaints that it has been breached. Given the importance of these functions, and the public interest in the way in which our offices respectively fulfil them, we believe that our work should itself be open to robust parliamentary scrutiny.

Such independent scrutiny can provide assurance to the Scottish Parliament, stakeholders and the wider public that the ethical standards regime is operating effectively, efficiently and fairly. It can also identify opportunities for improvement and support ongoing efforts to ensure our respective organisations remain transparent and accountable.

We would therefore welcome any review the Committee may wish to undertake of our performance, governance, use of resources, decision-making processes and broader contribution to public confidence in ethical standards across local government.

In the meantime, the following webpages include links to our annual reports, which provide updates on our performance in the last financial year and which we trust will be of interest to the Members of the Committee:

https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/annual-report-and-accounts
https://www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/corporate-info/annual-reports

We would be happy to meet with the Committee, or correspond further, should the Members wish to discuss this proposal.

Yours sincerely

Ian Bruce
Ethical Standards Commissioner

Suzanne Vestri
Convener of the Standards Commission for Scotland