The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee

Ian Bruce
Ethical Standards Commissioner

Suzanne Vestri
Convener of the Standards Commission for Scotland

By email only

17 November 2026

Dear Ian and Suzanne,

Thank you for your letter inviting the Committee to consider undertaking scrutiny of the work of the Office of the Ethical Standards Commissioner and the Standards Commission for Scotland.

As you will be aware, both the Standards Commission for Scotland and the Ethical Standards Commissioner have recently been invited to contribute to the Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee's evidence session on the Councillors' Code of Conduct, scheduled for 2 December. In addition, we understand that the Ethical Standards Commissioner will be giving evidence to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee on 26 November.

I am also conscious that the remit of the Public Audit Committee for this parliamentary session includes:

> "To consider and report on matters relating to the performance of officeholders established by the Parliament."

As such, you may wish to contact the Public Audit Committee regarding scrutiny of the performance of the Standards Commission for Scotland and the Ethical Standards Commissioner.

Whilst relevant policy matters relating to officeholders established by the Parliament may appropriately be considered by subject committees as part of their wider work programmes, as the Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee is doing through its scrutiny of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, the Committee has no current

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plans to undertake scrutiny of the performance, governance or operation of either organisation. Given the Public Audit Committee's specific remit in relation to the performance of officeholders established by the Parliament, it would appear to be the more appropriate forum for any such scrutiny.

I hope, however, that the forthcoming evidence sessions before both the Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee and the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee provide reassurance that Parliament continues to take a close interest in matters relating to standards and ethical conduct in public life.

Thank you again for writing. I have asked the clerks to circulate your correspondence, together with the annual reports to which you referred, to Committee members.

Yours sincerely,



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