



Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Alison Johnstone MSP
Presiding Officer

16 February 2026

Dear Presiding Officer

Review of Members of the Scottish Parliament Complaints Sanctions Process

Thank you for your letter of 5 February 2026 in relation to the report of the review undertaken by Rosemary Agnew.

The Committee considered the report at its meeting on 12 February. The recommendations set out in the report that involve the Committee's responsibilities raise substantial issues that would require detailed consideration. The Committee's usual process for proposing any substantive changes to the Code of Conduct is to be informed by views from relevant stakeholders. Given the short time left in the current Session of the Parliament, the Committee reached the view that we would not have time to carry out that work. We therefore intend to include a recommendation in our legacy paper that our successor committee should prioritise early consideration of the report in Session 7, including seeking to meet Rosemary Agnew to discuss her review.

There is a matter noted in the action plan attached to your letter that falls within the responsibilities of the SPCB but on which we would wish to offer an observation. This is in relation to making clear that pastoral support mechanisms available to staff are also available to MSPs. We believe that it is essential that any MSP who is informed that they are the subject of a complaint should know that while confidentiality must be maintained during any investigation, this does not mean that they cannot seek support from family, friends or, indeed, appropriate professionals. In relation to any support services made available to Members via the SPCB, we think it is essential that detailed background on the impact that being subject to investigation can have on any MSP must be well communicated to and understood by any services providers. In this regard, we are concerned that the first level of support available through the Individual Assistance Programme is wholly inadequate for an MSP facing a complaint. We hope this observation is of use to the SPCB in responding to this recommendation and would be happy to discuss this further.

A well-functioning complaints process is essential to the functioning of the Parliament and to ensuring Members meet the high standards of conduct that the public rightly expect of their elected representatives. This includes a process in which there is

transparency of processes and where the role of any committee charged with considering conduct matters and making recommendations to the Parliament is fully understood by all Members.

The Committee is grateful for the work undertaken on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin Whitfield".

Martin Whitfield MSP
Convener