

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

CABINET OFFICE

5 February 2013

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Paymaster General (Rt Hon Francis Maude MP):
The Report of the Triennial Review of the Committee on Standards in Public Life

Francis Maude:

I announced on 18 September 2012 (Official report, column 31WS) that I had asked the Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE to carry out a review of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. In the course of his review, the Rt Hon Peter Riddell CBE consulted with a wide range of interested stakeholders, many of whom sent substantive written responses to the Issues and Questions paper. I am very grateful to him for his detailed work on this review, and his informative report.

The review recognises the valuable role played by the Committee and the evolving nature of the issues it tackles. As such it concludes that the Committee on Standards in Public Life should remain as a non-departmental public body.

The report makes a number of recommendations, which the Government broadly accepts. In particular, the report recommends the clarification of the Committee's terms of reference in two respects. Firstly, the Government agrees that in future the Committee should not inquire into matters relating to the devolved legislatures and governments except with the agreement of those bodies. Secondly, the Government understands the Committee's remit to examine "standards of conduct of all holders of public office" as encompassing all those involved in the delivery of public services, not solely those appointed or elected to public office.

The Government notes that the report also recommends that the appointment panel for the Chair, and ordinary members, should include an MP but exclude members of the Public Administration Select Committee. The Government believes that the inclusion of the Chairman of the Public Administration Select Committee on the appointment panel for the Chairman of the Committee on Standards in Public Life would add valuable expertise to the appointment panel and, provided he then recused himself from any pre-appointment hearing for the new Chairman, it would not create any conflict of interest.

The report suggests that the Committee on Standards in Public Life should consult the Chairs of the Public Administration Select Committee and the Lords Constitution Committee when deciding on inquiries, with which the Government agrees.

I am grateful for the work of Sir Christopher Kelly over the last five years in his role as Chairman of the Committee. His term in office comes to an end in March and the Cabinet Office will now begin the process of recruiting a new Chairman for the Committee on Standards in Public Life to take these recommendations forward.

Copies of the review report, *The Report of the Triennial Review of the Committee on Standards in Public Life*, have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses