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Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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Committee on Standards in Public Life

24 July 2019

Dear Prime Minister,

Following your appointment as Prime Minister, I would welcome the opportunity to introduce you, as our sponsor, to the work of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The independent, advisory Committee on Standards in Public Life was established in 1994 by the then Prime Minister, Sir John Major, to advise the Prime Minister on ethical standards in public life. Lord Nolan, Chair of the first Committee, set out the Seven Principles of Public Life which have remained to this day. I have attached for information our terms of reference and our current membership.

We have no statutory powers but rely on our evidence-based reports to promote the highest standards of conduct across public life. To achieve this, we develop well-argued, evidence-based, practical recommendations to help bolster ethical standards. Our most recent reports were *Local Government Ethical Standards* (January 2019) and *Intimidation in Public Life* (2017) - the latter we undertook at the request of the then Prime Minister.

Our current review is on artificial intelligence (AI) and its impact on the public sector. We want to examine whether existing frameworks and regulations are sufficient to ensure that standards are upheld as data-enabled technologies are increasingly used by government and the public sector, and to explore what considerations of standards are in place in public sector procurement of AI.

The Committee is approaching its 25th anniversary in October this year. We intend to mark this event by examining the standards landscape, how it has changed since the Committee's establishment, and also by seeking young people's views on the relevance of the Principles today - are those 7 Principles the right ones, how are they understood, are there any gaps?

If you would like to hear more about our work plan and priorities, I would be delighted to meet at your convenience.

I am copying this letter to Helen MacNamara, Director General, Propriety and Ethics, Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely



Lord (Jonathan) Evans of Weardale KCB DL

Committee on Standards in Public Life: Terms of Reference

The Committee on Standards in Public Life monitors, reports and makes recommendations on all issues relating to standards in public life.

On 25 October 1994, the then Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. John Major, announced the establishment of the Committee on Standards in Public Life with the following terms of reference:

'To examine current concerns about standards of conduct of all holders of public office, including arrangements relating to financial and commercial activities, and make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements which might be required to ensure the highest standards of propriety in public life'.

'For these purposes, public office should include: Ministers, civil servants and advisers; Members of Parliament and UK Members of the European Parliament; Members and senior officers of all non-departmental public bodies and of national health service bodies; non-ministerial office holders; members and other senior officers of other bodies discharging publicly-funded functions; and elected members and senior officers of local authorities'.¹

On 12 November 1997, the Committee's terms of reference were extended by the then Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Tony Blair:

'To review issues in relation to the funding of political parties, and to make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements'.²

On 5 February 2013, the Minister for the Cabinet Office clarified the Committee's terms of reference in two respects:

'...in future the Committee should not inquire into matters relating to the devolved legislatures and governments except with the agreement of those bodies.'

'...the Committee's remit to examine 'standards of conduct of all holders of public office' [encompasses] all those involved in the delivery of public services, not solely those appointed or elected to public office'.³

Membership

The current members of the Committee are:

Lord (Jonathan) Evans of Weardale KCB DL, Chairman
Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP (Labour)
Simon Hart MP (Conservative)
Dr Jane Martin CBE
Dame Shirley Pearce DBE
Jane Ramsey
Monisha Shah
Rt Hon Lord (Andrew) Stunell OBE (Liberal Democrat)

¹ Hansard (HC) 25 October 1994, col 758

² Hansard (HC) 12 November 1997, col 899

³ Hansard (HC) 5 February 2013, col 7WS