

Committee on Standards in Public Life
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Councillor Richard Cotton
Chair, Standards Committee
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
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**Committee on
Standards in
Public Life**

Sent by email

18 July 2022

Dear Councillor Cotton,

Thank you for your letter of 12 July about the government's response to our 2019 *Local Government Ethical Standards* report.

We were similarly very disappointed that the government decided not to implement our recommendations. It took over three years for them to respond and then to accept just a few in principle. We aimed in that report to produce a balanced, considered package of recommendations to strengthen the arrangements in place whilst respecting the benefits of a localised approach. I do understand your committee's frustration at the limited powers within the local government standards regime to address poor behaviour.

You asked what our next steps might be. The Committee is not based in statute, we cannot therefore enforce our recommendations. However, although we are not a campaigning organisation, we try to exert influence where we can. We have, for example, published our own update on councils adopting our best practice recommendations, and I have spoken at local government events in the past year, most recently at the Lawyers in Local Government Leadership conference on 13 May. We made public our disappointment with the government's response and reiterated our regret in our 2021/22 annual report.

We also intend to write to the Secretary of State once the new Prime Minister has been appointed.

We would encourage those in local government to take up the government's stated commitment to work with local authorities and representative organisations to ensure the hard work done by those in local government is not put at risk by a small minority of individuals who do not live up to high standards of public life.

Honesty | Objectivity | Openness | Selflessness | Integrity | Accountability | Leadership

Finally, I would like to thank you and your colleagues for the work you do on the standards committee and for continuing to make the case for the importance of high standards and the Principles of Public Life.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lord Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL
Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life