**Room G.07**

**Committee on Standards in Public Life**

**1 Horse Guards Road**

**London**

**SW1A 2HQ**

**Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP**

**Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office**

Sent by email

11 November 2024

Dear Minister,

Thank you for taking the time to meet on 29 October. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to explain CSPL’s role and work to date. Thank you also for outlining and discussing the government’s proposed Ethics and Integrity Commission. I wanted to write and confirm what I said in that meeting, that the Committee on Standards in Public Life is well placed to assist the government in its development of the new Commission.

CSPL was established as an independent body to advise on arrangements for upholding ethical standards across public life and promoting the Nolan Principles. Over its 30 years, the Committee has played a key part in the standards landscape, conducting reviews and producing reports that have set frameworks and made recommendations for upholding ethical behaviour within a wide range of public bodies. Indeed, the Committee has been described as a ‘workshop for running repairs’ to the system.

Over the years we have been instrumental in shaping the standards landscape. Our recommendations have led to many of the institutions that we see today. These include the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, the Commissioner for Public Appointments, the Adviser on Ministerial Standards, and the Electoral Commission. As a majority independent Committee with cross party representation, we have also helped frame difficult debates in public life, such as our work on MPs’ expenses and on Intimidation in Public Life. We also look ahead at emerging challenges and opportunities, as we did in our report on AI and Public Standards.

Our evidence-based reviews are conducted on the basis of listening to a wide range of voices, taking evidence from experts and stakeholders, carefully reviewing that evidence so that we can reach well-argued conclusions and, where appropriate, recommendations. We do not consider individual cases, but we maintain strong relationships with the various Commissioners and Regulators. As we discussed, our secretariat organises regular gatherings of this group to share themes and insights. Those strong relationships are critical for us as they help us identify areas where ‘running repairs’ might be required while ensuring that we remain informed on current standards issues.

I would be very happy to have further discussions about how we might best assist the government in the formation of the new Commission’s structure and remit.

I am copying this letter to Darren Tierney, Director General, Propriety & Ethics, Cabinet Office.

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**Doug Chalmers**

**Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life**