

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE
329th MEETING HELD
AT 10.00 ON THURSDAY 19 DECEMBER 2024**

MINUTES

Present: Doug Chalmers CB DSO OBE (Chair)
Rt Hon Lady (Mary) Arden DBE
Rt Hon Baroness (Margaret) Beckett GBE
Councillor Ruth Dombey OBE
Ewen Fergusson
Baroness (Simone) Finn
John Henderson CB
Professor Gillian Peele

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary
Nicola Richardson, Deputy Head, Secretariat
Amy Austin, Senior Policy Adviser
Peter Kelleher, Senior Policy Adviser

Maggie O'Boyle, Press Officer¹

The Chair welcomed Ruth Dombey OBE, representing the Liberal Democrat party, to her first meeting of the Committee. Ruth introduced herself to the Committee.

1. APOLOGIES

Rt Hon Ian Blackford.

2. REGISTERS

Members were asked to let the Secretariat know of any changes to the register of interests which had been circulated.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2024 were agreed subject to one amendment.

Chair's update

¹ Maggie O'Boyle provides part-time press support to the Civil Service Commission; the House of Lords Appointments Commission; the Advisory Committee for Business Appointments; the Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments; and the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Members noted the Chair's recent and forthcoming meetings.²

Members noted that Jim McMahon MP, Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution had written to the Chair confirming the government would shortly be consulting on reforms to the local government standards framework and inviting the Chair to attend a roundtable with key stakeholders in the sector.^{3 4} This was in response to the Chair's letter of 21 October to Angela Rayner, Deputy PM and Secretary of State for State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, drawing attention to CSPL's 2019 report on local government ethical standards.

4. CURRENT REVIEW

The draft report of the review was discussed and comments noted. The final draft would come to the January Committee meeting.

5. 30th ANNIVERSARY PLAN

Members noted an update on the planned education outreach events to mark the Committee's 30th anniversary year.

6. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members discussed the work programme for 2025.

7. CURRENT STANDARDS ISSUES

Members noted recent media reports on protecting the electoral system from foreign interference. CSPL's Regulating Election Finance report made a number of recommendations to reduce the potential for foreign money being used to influence UK elections, including that donations should only be made from profits generated in the UK to address the risk that the current rules on donations from companies provide a route for foreign money to influence UK elections.

8. FORWARD AGENDA

The Committee noted the forward agenda.

9. AOB

Communications Update

² Meetings are [published](#) in the Committee's register of stakeholder meetings.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-jim-mcmahon-obe-mp-to-chair-cspl>

⁴ The Government published its consultation on 18 December.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england#:~:text=Consultation%20description,of%20the%20power%20of%20suspension.>

The Committee noted the monthly dashboard overview of CSPL's website for November 2024.

Date of Next Meeting

Friday 24 January 2025 at 10.00.

CSPL Secretariat
December 2024