

**MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING OF
THE ETHICS AND INTEGRITY COMMISSION**

10:00 - 12:00; THURSDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2025

Present:

Members

Doug Chalmers CB DSO OBE (Chair)
Rt Hon Lady Arden DBE
Rt Hon Ian Blackford
Councillor Ruth Dombey OBE
Ewen Fergusson
Professor Gillian Peele

EIC Secretariat

Stuart Sterling OBE, Chief Executive
Lesley Bainsfair, Head of Secretariat
Nicola Iles MBE, Head of Reviews
Peter Kelleher, Head of Corporate Support
Amy Austin, Policy Adviser

External Advisers

Professor Mark Philp, Chair, Research Advisory Board
Maggie O'Boyle, Press Officer

1. APOLOGIES

None.

2. REGISTERS

The Chair invited Members to review the Register of Interests and consider if any additional individual interests require declaration.

Action: Members were asked to email the Secretariat with any changes.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2025 were agreed.

4. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair paid tribute to Lesley Bainsfair, who served as Secretary to CSPL for 8 years, noting that this would be her final Commission meeting, and acknowledging her outstanding contribution to the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) and the establishment of the EIC.

The Chair provided an update on recent and forthcoming engagements.

The Chair noted that recruitment for the three Independent Member vacancies closed on 14th November. A thorough sifting process concluded on 18th November, resulting in a robust shortlist. Interviews will take place in mid-December.

The Chair reported that liaison is ongoing between No.10 and political parties regarding the nominations for Political Member vacancies.

The Chair proposed a new model to manage the Commission's expanded remit and the need to run workstreams concurrently. The proposal is to assign two Independent Members (one lead, one support) to each major area of responsibility, to work closely with the Secretariat team.

Members agreed that a closer involvement of lead members in all stages of a project, including early scoping, would be helpful, and requested monthly updates on each project. Governance around decision-making would be defined later.

The Chair welcomed Nicola Iles as Head of the Reviews team, noting her additional agreement to take on some interim Chief of Staff responsibilities. Hannah O'Donoghue will shortly be joining the Secretariat as Office Manager (21st November). Recruitment for the Head of Code of Conduct and Head of Public Engagement is progressing.

The Chair noted that he will host a Members' Away Day in the new year, once new members are in place, to discuss the year ahead and an EIC Engagement Strategy.

No new FOI requests were received this month. A reply was issued for an internal review.

5. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: NETWORK OF STANDARDS BODIES AND ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Following a successful first meeting the Chair confirmed that the Network's TOR had been agreed. It focuses on bringing together bodies to share best practice and identify system-wide issues. A general discussion followed on a number of key systemic standards issues, some of which will be looked at in more detail as they

may feature in the Annual Report to the Prime Minister. The meeting also discussed staff capacity, and the expanded roles of various bodies.

6. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: CODES OF CONDUCT

The Chair outlined the Prime Minister's request regarding the Codes of Conduct workstream and proposed that the work should include drawing lessons from the private sector and engaging behavioural experts. The project will be framed by the Nolan Principles.

Members discussed the scope of the work, agreeing that the focus should be on providing high-level, process-focused advice to help various sectors draft, embed and review their own codes.

The Chair confirmed that the EIC responsibilities under the Public Office (Accountability) Bill would remain bounded by Part 2 of the Bill (as currently drafted). This will translate into providing guidance on codes of conduct for public authorities and, in time, with the resources to do so, see the EIC conducting deep dive assessments into sectors chosen by the Commission. These two functions, advice and assessment, would enable the EIC to become a centre of excellence on codes of conduct.

7. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: REVIEWS

Members discussed options shortlisted for the Commission's first Review. It was also agreed that the EIC should now consider activity that it might undertake following last month's presentation from the Gambling Commission. The delivery of the EIC's first review, and those subsequent, would be in line with the published EIC implementation plan.

8. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Members discussed initial priorities for this workstream, including the development of an Engagement Strategy. This work would be advanced once new staff are in post and an updated standards landscape map is produced.

9. CURRENT STANDARDS ISSUES

Members discussed a number of current issues.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 18th December at 10:00, 1 Horse Guards Road.

Time Change: From January 2026 onwards, EIC meetings will be held in the afternoon at 14:00.