



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Local Government and Regeneration Committee

**Kevin Stewart MSP**  
**Convener**

Bill Thomson  
Commissioner for Ethical  
Standards in Public Life in  
Scotland

Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

***By email only***

Direct Tel: (0131) 348 5219  
(RNID Typetalk calls welcome)  
Fax: (0131) 348 5600  
(Central) Textphone: (0131) 348 5415  
[lgr.committee@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:lgr.committee@scottish.parliament.uk)

2 December 2015

Dear Bill,

### **COUNCILLORS SITTING ON ARMS LENGTH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

You may already be aware the Committee has been undertaking a short inquiry into the governance arrangements for arm's length external organisations (ALEOs).

So far the Committee has held two evidence sessions on the governance of ALEOs, 5 October, and 18 November, with our final session being held today. Links to the Official Reports for the earlier meetings are attached for ease of reference:

Local Government and Regeneration Committee, [Official Report](#), 5 October 2015

Local Government and Regeneration Committee, [Official Report](#), 18 November 2015

During these evidence sessions we have become acutely aware there is varied practice amongst councillors as to how they approach declaration of interests and, the action they taken when there is a conflict of interest. Your earlier correspondence with the Committee on 15 May helpfully confirmed the Councillors' Code expressly applies to the actions of councillors when carrying out the duties of bodies to which they have been appointed or nominated by the council.

The Committee would find it helpful to have your views on the inconsistent approach taken by councillors in relation to declaration of interests and conflicts of interests, particularly when this inconsistency is evident in the same council and, whether these issues give you any cause for concern.

It would also be helpful to know whether any guidance has been issued to support the Code of Conduct on these matters and if there are any other matters raised in the evidence which you would like to comment on.

We are in the process of considering the evidence we have received and how this will inform the direction of our report. It would therefore be greatly appreciated if we could have your response on the points above prior to Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

***By email***

Convener  
Local Government and Regeneration Committee