



STRATEGIC PLAN

2012 / 2016

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Laid before the Scottish Parliament by the Standards Commission Scotland under paragraph 10A to Schedule 1 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life (Scotland) Act 2000 as amended by the Scottish Parliamentary Commission & Commissioners Act 2010 on 28 March 2012.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Standards Commission for Scotland (“the Standards Commission”) was appointed by Scottish Ministers on 27 January 2002 in terms of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 (“the 2000 Act”).
- 1.2 The Standards Commission comprises a Convener, four Commission Members and its office of three staff, led by the Secretary to the Commission.
- 1.3 The Standards Commission’s functions are provided for by the 2000 Act and the Scottish Parliamentary Commissions and Commissioners etc. Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”). This legislation establishes two separate offices: these are the Standards Commission and the Public Standards Commissioner for Scotland (PSC) who is based within the Commission for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland.
 - The role of the PSC is to investigate any complaint of alleged breaches to the Codes of Conduct.
 - The role of the Standards Commission is to encourage high ethical standards in public life; including the promotion and enforcement of the Codes of Conduct and to issue guidance to councils and to devolved public bodies.
- 1.4 The Standards Commission receives reports from the PSC on the outcome of his investigations. It is only where the PSC considers a councillor or member of a devolved public body may have breached the relevant Code of Conduct, that he submits a report to the Standards Commission. The Standards Commission will then determine whether to:
 - direct the PSC to carry out further investigations;
 - hold a hearing; or
 - take no action.
- 1.5 If the decision by the Standards Commission is to hold a hearing, this will be to determine whether a councillor or member of a devolved public body has contravened the Councillors’ or the Members’ Code.
- 1.6 If the Members of the Standards Commission find that a councillor or member has breached the relevant Code, the Standards Commission determines the sanction to be applied in accordance with the options available in the 2000 Act
- 1.7 The Scottish Parliamentary Commissions and Commissioners etc. Act 2010 also provides that the Standards Commission be a supported body of the Parliamentary Corporation.

2. CODES OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 The Scottish Parliament has approved one Code of Conduct for all Scottish Councillors. Each of the designated Devolved Public Bodies will have a Code for their appointed Members to reflect the functions and characteristics of the individual body. These individual Codes have been approved by Scottish Ministers and adapted from a model Code approved by the Scottish Parliament.
- 2.2 The Codes of Conduct have a key role in setting out, openly and clearly, the standards of conduct that must be applied by those in public office. This is vital to reinforce and strengthen public confidence in councillors and members of the Boards of Devolved Public Bodies.
- 2.3 The Councillors' Code of Conduct applies to all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland. There are approximately 1222 Councillors in total.
- 2.4 As at 1 April 2012 individual Codes of Conduct have been made and approved for 106 Devolved Public Bodies set out in Schedule 3 of the 2000 Act. Codes of Conduct currently apply to the following categories of public bodies:
- National Bodies e.g. Scottish Legal Aid Board
 - Regional Bodies e.g. Highlands and Islands Enterprise
 - National Health Service Boards
 - Further Education Colleges
 - National Parks
 - Regional Transport Partnerships
 - Community Justice Authorities
 - Water Authorities

There are approximately 1480 Members of Devolved Public Bodies in total.

3. PURPOSE

The Standards Commission is an independent body whose purpose is to encourage high ethical standards in public life through the promotion and enforcement of Codes of Conduct for Councillors and those appointed to the Boards of Devolved Public Bodies.

4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2012/13 – 2015/16

The Standards Commission's strategic objectives are as follows:

1. To promote the Ethical Standards Framework and so encourage recognition of and respect for the Codes of Conduct by the public and other stakeholders

Actions to achieve this objective will be:

- a. Regular dialogue with stakeholders to promote and monitor understanding of and respect for the Codes amongst the public, councillors and members of public bodies
- b. Consistent decision making by the Standards Commission in relation to breach cases and hearings
- c. Engagement with and the provision of advice to Scottish Ministers and the Parliament
- d. Promotion of the role and content of the Codes in Scottish public life.

Measurements of achievement will be:

Measurement	Timescale
The details of hearings held that will be published in the Standards Commission's Annual Report	Annual
Assessment of the level of awareness and attitudes to the Codes that will be submitted annually to Scottish Ministers and the Parliament	Annual
Having undertaken during 2011/12 a survey of the views of Monitoring Officers and Standards Officers on the ethical standards framework, the development of a programme of survey work, including councillors, members of public bodies, and the public and publication of its results	By March 2013
The actions taken by the Standards Commission to promote the Codes, including in light of the lessons learned from the 2011/12 and further surveys	By March 2013
Evidence through the surveys of an increased awareness among the public of the ethical standards framework	By March 2016

2. To assist councils and public bodies to achieve the highest ethical standards of conduct and ensure the guidance and support provided by the Standards Commission responds to their needs

Actions to achieve this objective will be:

- a. A review of complaints referred to the Public Standards Commissioner (“PSC”) and information obtained from other sources to identify issues for guidance and advice to councils or public bodies
- b. Giving support to the development of education programmes to help councils and public bodies provide training for their councillors and members
- c. Provision of guidance on the interpretation of the Codes to the staff and members of councils and public bodies
- d. Publication of the Standards Commission findings in any breach hearings for the information of relevant organisations i.e. all councils or public bodies
- e. Periodic consultation on the Standards Commission’s Guidance document
- f. Consideration and application of the learning from surveys referred to in strategic objective 1
- g. Liaison with relevant organisations to identify the needs of councils and public bodies to help focus the guidance and support provided by the Standards Commission.

Measurements of achievement will be:

Measurement	Timescale
The analysis of trends in complaints to the PSC and an account of any guidance or advice issued	Annual
The number of bodies that are supported by the education programme each year	Annual
The recorded programme of visits to councils and public bodies	Annual
Advice will have been provided within 20 working days of receipt of the request	Ongoing
The annual review of the focus of the Communication Strategy	Annual
The review of results from surveys conducted each year and their response rates	Annual
The recorded programme of assistance to Councils through the attendance at events run by the Standards Commission and others to aid newly elected councillors following the 2012 elections in terms of their understanding of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct	By December 2012

<p>3. To enforce the Codes of Conduct impartially, timeously and in accordance with legislation</p>
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Actions to achieve this objective will be:

- a. The Standards Commission will act in accordance with the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 and the Scottish Parliamentary Commissions and Commissioners etc. Act 2010
- b. The Standards Commission will undertake its statutory adjudication role, in relation to alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct, wholly independently of the PSC
- c. If deemed necessary, the Standards Commission will direct the PSC to carry out further investigations in potential breach of code cases
- d. The Standards Commission will determine whether or not to hold a hearing where a potential breach has been reported by the PSC
- e. In the event of a finding of a breach of the relevant Code, the Hearing Panel will determine the sanction to be applied.

Measurements of achievement will be:

Measurement	Timescale
Cases will have been listed for hearing to commence within 12 weeks of the decision to hold a Hearing	Ongoing
Relevant parties will have been informed of the outcome of hearings within 15 working days	Ongoing
The outcome of hearings will have been made available on the website within 25 working days of the hearing	Ongoing
A substantive response to correspondence will have been given within 20 days of receipt	Ongoing
A substantive response to complaints will have been given within 20 days of receipt	Ongoing

4. To operate in accordance with the principles of good governance, best value, joint working and working in partnership and to secure continuous improvement

Actions to achieve this objective will be:

- a. Collective leadership by the Standards Commission in the promotion of ethical standards in Scotland
- b. Commitment to the Nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland (duty, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability and stewardship, openness, honesty, leadership and respect)
- c. The adoption of good practice and governance in the oversight of the Standards Commission’s finances and other resources
- d. The identification and taking forward of opportunities to work jointly or in partnership with other public bodies in order to ensure efficient delivery of the Standards Commission’s role
- e. Commitment to the Equality Duty principles (the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, equality of opportunity and the fostering of good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it).

Measurements of achievement will be:

Measurement	Timescale
The annual appraisal of Standards Commission’s Members	Annual
An annual assessment of the Standards Commission’s contribution to the Principles of Public Life in Scotland	Annual
A satisfactory annual report from the Standards Commission’s auditors	Annual
An Annual Report that will identify how the Standards Commission has delivered best value in the preceding year and shows what steps have been taken to secure continuous improvement and increase the levels of joint working and partnership undertaken	Annual
An annual assessment of the Standard Commission’s commitment to the Equality Duty principles	Annual

5. Estimated costs 2012/13 – 2015/16

Strategic Objective	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
To promote the Ethical Standards Framework and so encourage recognition of and respect for the Codes of Conduct by the public and other stakeholders	25% £58,250	25% £58,750	25% £59,037	25% £59,130
To assist councils and public bodies to achieve the highest ethical standards of conduct and ensure the guidance and support provided by the Standards Commission responds to their needs	35% £81,550	35% £82,250	35% £82,653	35% £82,782
To enforce the Codes of Conduct impartially, timeously and in accordance with legislation	25% £58,250	25% £58,750	25% £59,037	25% £59,130
To operate in accordance with the principles of good governance, best value, joint working and working in Partnership and to secure continuous improvement	15% £35,250	15% £35,250	15% £35,422	15% £35,478
Total	£233,000	£235,000	£236,149	£236,520

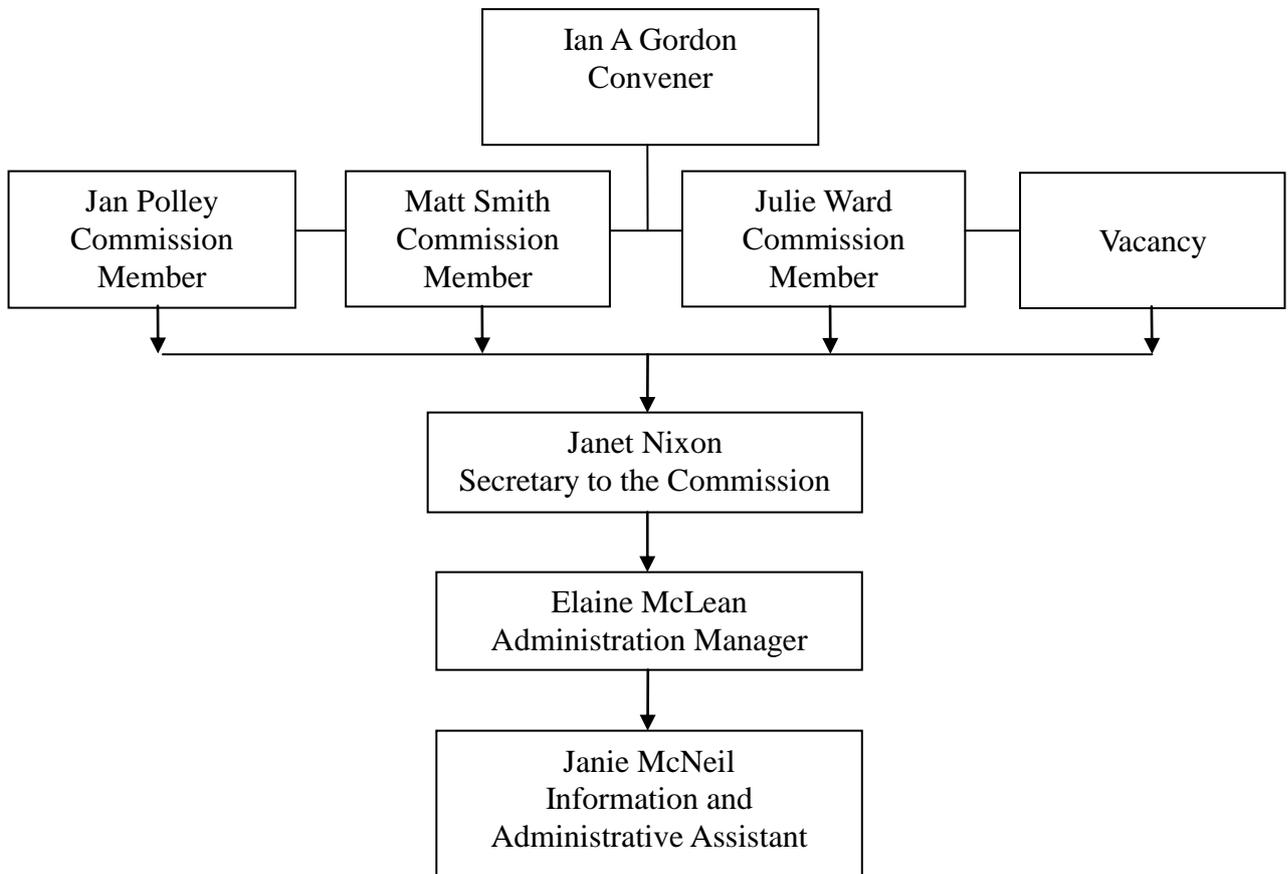
The estimated costs are based on a number of assumptions:

- The number of Commission Members remains the same (Convener and four Members)
- There is no increase to the Convener and Members' remuneration
- The number of employees in post remains the same
- Staff salaries remain based on the Scottish Government grade and pay scale structure
- Public sector salaries remain frozen
- There is no increase in the rates paid for employer National Insurance and pension contributions during the period

Should any of these assumptions need to be revisited, adjustments may be required to the estimated costs.

6. STRUCTURE

The following is a chart showing the structure of the organisation:





STANDARDS COMMISSION
SCOTLAND