

Committee on Standards in Public Life

*Standards in
Public Life*

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11 December 2009

Dear Jenny,

I am grateful to you for allowing the Committee additional time to comment on the Electoral Commission's consultation paper on future enforcement policy following changes made by the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009. I am sorry not to have come back to you earlier.

You know already that the Committee welcome the changes made in the Act to the Commission's regulatory powers in relation to party funding and election finance.

We agree that the issues identified in the paper about implementation are the right ones, and we particularly welcome the paper's emphasis on a risk-based approach and a proportionate response.

We have only two comments to offer.

First, in view of some recent commentary you may want to make explicit what I am sure is your intention anyway - that you will treat all political parties in the same way.

Second, in its 11th report the Committee put some emphasis on what it saw as the importance of the Commission being sufficiently close to the activities it regulates to be able to draw on local knowledge. The specific recommendation related to the regional offices not only in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh but in England as well. But there may be other ways of achieving the same objective.

I hope this is helpful.

*Yon Simony,
Kell (Kell)*

CC Christopher Kelly