Directorate for Propriety and Ethics

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

E: DirectorProprietyandEthics@gov.scot

Tina Budge, Marion Calder and Susan Smith
For Women Scotland
By Email to : info@forwomen.scot

10 November 2025

Dear Ms Budge, Ms Calder and Ms Smith,

Thank you for your letter of 19th October. I have been asked by the Permanent Secretary to respond.

The Permanent Secretary places the highest importance on the integrity of the civil service, and compliance with the Civil Service Code ("the Code") is a fundamental duty borne by all civil servants working for the Scottish Government. The Code does not provide a complaints process for third parties to raise concerns, and there is no mechanism to escalate your concerns. However, while the Code does not provide a complaints process for third parties, it is important that serious concerns raised about compliance are properly considered.

In this case, I undertook a number of steps to look into your concerns. These steps included speaking to attendees of the meeting of 5th June, reading the transcript you provided of the meeting, and other notes of the meeting with which I was provided. For the reasons set out in my letter to you of 24th September, I concluded that there was no breach of the Civil Service Code. I have undertaken a review of my response and decided that my conclusion, and the reasons for it, remain unchanged. I am satisfied that I have appropriately investigated all the evidence available to me and reached a reasonable and proportionate determination. I therefore consider the matter is now at a close.

If you remain dissatisfied with this response, you may wish to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Regards

Michael Chalmers
Director Propriety and Ethics
Scottish Government