

# **STANDARDS, PROCEDURES AND PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

## **INQUIRY INTO LOBBYING**

### **SUBMISSION RECEIVED FROM BOB THOMSON**

In response to the call to evidence for your inquiry into lobbying, I wish to make the general points below.

Active and informed participation is an essential aspect of democracy – citizens and civil society must have access to the information they need to make judgments about their lives, their government and their democracy. Without accurate information, citizens will be unable to play their role in a functioning healthy democracy, with the deterioration of the democracy as a consequence.

The current levels of distrust and dissatisfaction with politics and politicians are inherently linked to levels of secrecy and behind the scenes lobbying activity, whether this is actual or perceived is irrelevant. A mandatory lobbying register which effectively ensures citizens can see who is lobbying whom should be seen as a required part of a functioning democracy.

Many lobbyists are former, MPs, MSPs, councillors and many of the companies they represent have given monies directly and/or indirectly to political parties which underlines the need for openness.

I would urge you to swiftly act to demonstrate that the Scottish Parliament continues to abide by and wishes to develop its founding principles of transparency and accessibility.

**BOB THOMSON**  
**7 JANUARY 2014**