Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Lobbying (Scotland) Bill

Written submission received from Mark Whittet

I write (again) with evidence and proven, best-practice recommendations re the above.

As I presented to the Committee (and as now also -again - re- attached) [Clerk’s note: the “Lobbying Log” has not been reproduced in this submission] the evidence - and co-incidentally - the best practice solution to the 'problem' you have misdiagnosed is this;

* that all MPs (including ministers) in Holyrood publish a 'Lobbying Log' of all their business/ public duty meetings (six monthly in arrears) as is presently the best-case practice by Malcolm Wicks, a Tory MEP

This Lobbying Log - solves all known (mis-diagnosed) and (in Scotland -un- evidenced) problems of paid-for AND/OR unpaid-for charity lobbying.

This is the proven and best-practice procedure presently in place.

Having been both/ all an (elected) community Councillor, a professional journalist, professional lobbyist and as a part-qualified solicitor and former Director and Deputy Convenor of the Scottish Legal Action Group (www.scolag.org) <2004-2013> I recommend this to you on self-evident best practice grounds, and also because it would avoid needless and wasteful public expenditure to 'solve' a non-existent problem.

When I presented that same facts, information, and experience to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) they seized upon this as patent best practice and made the same call on the same grounds based on the same evidence (or rather lack of) to the Parliament Committee in the last Scottish parliamentary session.

And that is my evidence - ie the lack of your evidence that there is a problem of this type which needs to be ‘fixed.

It is pertinent to note that while - in an entirely un-related field - you/r government is stridently calling for 'evidence-led' policy make on the Scottish shale gas / shale energy sector. That industry - as well as the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) - entirely supports an evidence-led policy making process.

Ergo, your non-evidence-based approach to policy-making on lobbying is logically indefensible, inconsistent, meretricious and wasteful.

It is as self-willingly blind as other non-evidence based policies based on mis-diagnosed harm reduction/ public safety where the facts and evidence are ignored
so they can be shoe-horned into a pre-set dogmatic legislation (eg road 'speed' tax cameras and various laws relating to provision of adult sexual services and the criminalisation of too many drugs (and we all know how successful the 1930s Alcohol Prohibition Act in the USA was!)

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